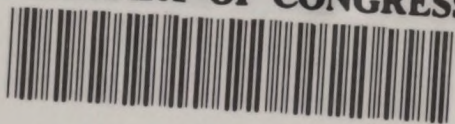


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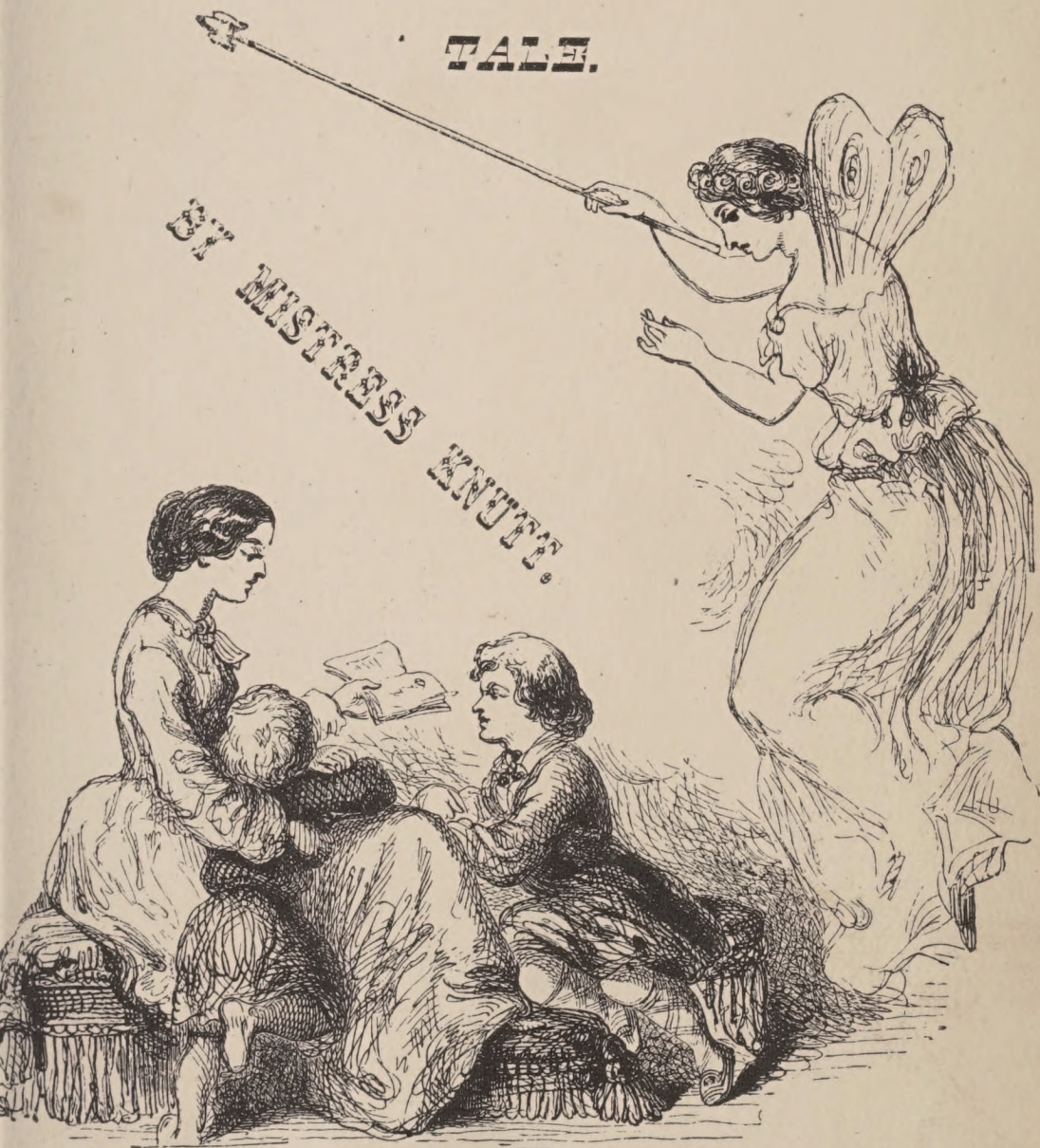


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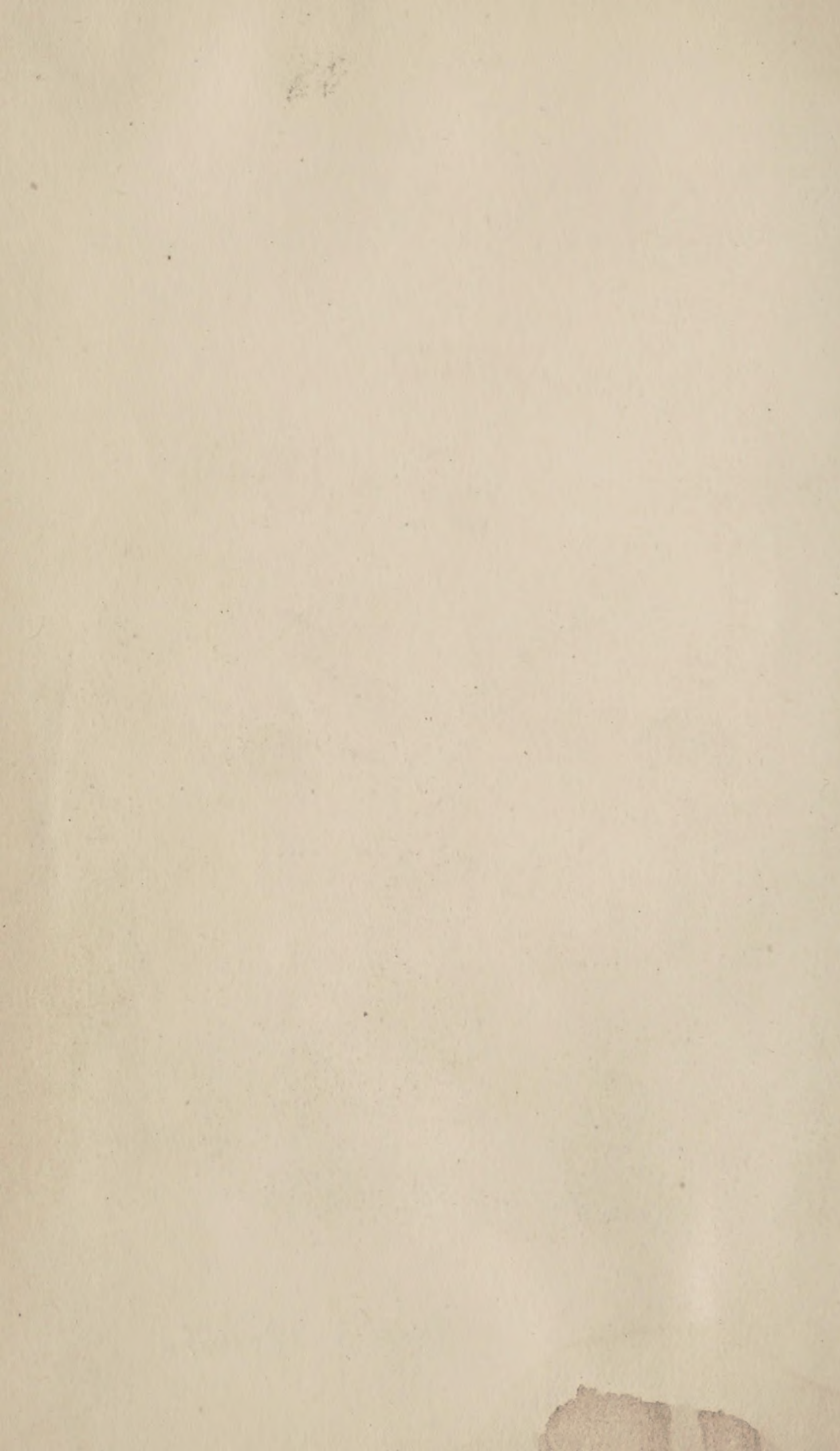
THE
SNOW ANGEL.

TALE.

BY
MISS MRS. KNUTE.



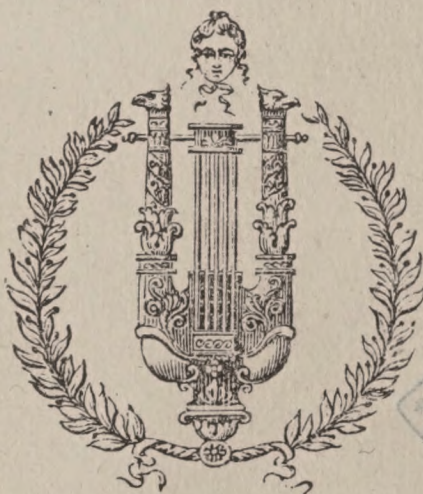
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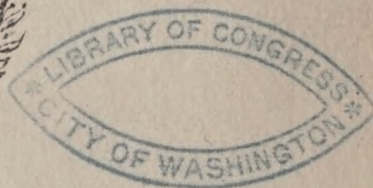
THE
SNOW ANGEL:

A TALE OF
LIFE-LAND AND DREAM-LAND.

BY
Virginia
MISTRESS KNUTT.



Pseud.



NEW YORK:
PUBLISHED BY JAMES MILLER,
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Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1866,

By JAMES MILLER,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the
Southern District of New York.

TO MY LITTLE NAME-CHILD,

BABY ANNA,

THIS STRANGE AND SIMPLE STORY

IS DEDICATED

BY

GRANDMAMMA.

PREFACE.

THIS story, dear young folks, was written for your entertainment during the war, now so happily closed; but, owing to unforeseen events, could not be presented to you until now. A preface is, I know, a very dull thing for little folks to read; but I am induced to write this because I think it will give you a greater interest in the story to learn that the scenes around Glen-Holme, and the sayings and doings of its inmates, are all real and true. From Mr. Vane down to Old Sledge, *all* the Life-Land characters of the story are living, except one, a brave young officer, the first-born son of General Germaine, who died from the effects of a wound and disease, contracted whilst he was battling for the preservation of his country. Sweetly and softly sank the gallant young soldier to rest, after the din of the terrific war was over—well satisfied that the victory for which his life was

offered was won, well content to die in the blissful hope of a better and higher victory over death and the grave.

Of course, dear young folks, you will all understand the Dream-Land part. I will not offend your judgment and imagination by doubting that. It would be too much like a certain rustic artist, who once drew the portrait of a cat, and wrote in large letters under it, THIS IS A CAT, if I were to go and dissect the story and explain it all away. Therefore, accept it with its idealities ; never doubt its facts, and believe that the characters who figure in it still live to console and comfort each other, by the continuance of that friendship which was cemented at Glen-Holme. Only their names are fictitious.

Should you like THE SNOW-ANGEL, and let me know through my good friend, Mr. Miller, I can promise you another quite as interesting from my old brown portfolio.

FRIGIDA KNUTT.

WASHINGTON.

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SNOW ANGEL.

CHAPTER I.

GLEN-HOLME AND ITS INMATES.

COME to Glen-Holme with me, little friends. The road thither winds up around the hill-side, and we have to climb until we reach the very hall-door. Tired enough we are now that we are there, so let us walk right into the spacious and handsome parlor, where a lady in deep mourning sits reading a newspaper. Her countenance is pale and sad, but expressive of a feeling of painful interest; and no wonder, for she is reading a stirring account of the famous and bloody battle of Antietam. Our entrance will not in the least disturb her, for we are supposed to wear caps of invisibility.

A bright wood-fire blazes and crackles on the marble hearth, for although it is the Indian summer-time, the mornings and evenings at Glen-Holme are very chilly. A flower-stand, filled with choice plants, stands before the large western French window, which is draped with clouds of white lace, rich with curious embroidery. Pictures adorn the walls. Every thing is well arranged and exceedingly comfortable in the Glen-Holme parlor. The ruddy fire, the crimson carpet and soft cushions, suggest agreeable and cheerful thoughts. At the east end of the room an oriel window opens to the floor, and standing at it, with her face pressed closely up against the glass, is a little girl clad in deep mourning, who is watching something without, with eager interest. In a corner near her, in a large cage, swings a gray African parrot, muttering wrathfully to himself in a lingo caught from the Mahrattas, in his native land. In the sunshine, that streams like a glory through the window, hangs a wire cage, in which flutters a canary; flutters and whistles, as he plunges into his porcelain bath-

tub, and flings the sparkling water abroad like spray, most of which falls on the head of "Willie," the parrot, and enrages him. Not only on the gray ruffled pow of Willie, but also on the black, glossy hair of the little maiden who stands at the window amidst the sunshine, looking wistfully down into the wild glen below. Her name is Effie Varney, and she is the youngest daughter of the lady who sits reading the morning paper beside the fire. The child's black eyes, rosy cheeks, and red lips are all as bright and glowing as the sunlit stream sweeping over the rocks below; and the crimson and russet leaves that flutter down from the high tree-tops, like girls with gayly-painted wings. Flutter and drop, quivering through the air from tree-tops all aglow with foliage of red, orange, green, and brown, which the Indian-summer sun, shining through a golden mist, has crowned with a glory exceedingly beautiful to see.

"Stop that, you Daisy!" exclaimed Effie, laughing, and looking up, as the canary sent a shower of spray over her face; "stop, you

toad, and sprinkle Willie; he's as mad as mad can be, and needs cooling."

But the canary has completed his bath, and with a saucy chirp hops upon his perch and begins to warble and trill, quite indifferent to the parrot's rage and the chiding of Effie, who has turned away, and is again gazing down into the beautiful glen. Suddenly she clapped her hands, and said cheerily, "One—two—three—four! there, now! I do wish the wind would leave them, clinging to the boughs like wild-flowers! They look beautiful up there; and I like, too, to see them skurrying down as if they were chasing each other; only they scare off the ground-squirrels—poor little things!—who come out to sun themselves on the lichens and mosses. Only think, mamma dear: one poor little fellow, after being scared out of his wits by a crowd of red leaves that fluttered down right on his back, scampered up among the rocks and stretched himself on a warm lichen, when, just as he got comfortably settled, down rattled a hickory-nut plump on his head, and he rolled over and over, then

ran fit to break his neck home to his mammy. Now just look here, mamma—" Effie turned to appeal to her mamma, but Mrs. Varney had left the room some minutes before, so intent on the thrilling descriptions of the battle as to have forgotten Effie's presence.

"Heigh-ho! it's too still here for me. I can't stand it another minute; and I'll just go right off and get Ida, and Hal, and Dody, and we'll have a grand play in the glen before lesson-time," said Effie, as she danced down the room, and waltzed out of the door. I don't believe she could have walked, if she had tried. She was never still except when she was saying her prayers. Even when she would be studying her lessons she would wriggle and twirl, and every now and then give herself a shake, as if to settle the knowledge she was gaining in her brain. She was irrepressible, and did every thing with her whole heart and soul. She played, she studied, she sewed for her dolls, she laughed, sang, and scolded, all in the same hearty way. It was terrible sometimes to Mrs. Varney, who was much out of

health ; but there was no help for it—it was the child's nature, and her mamma hoped that she would become more gentle as she grew older ; besides this, she knew that Effie was a truthful and good-principled child, who feared to do wrong, because she knew that all wrong is offensive to God ; so she was very patient with her little troublesome ways.

Effie's father had been dead some months, and her mamma, accompanied by Clare—who was a young lady grown, and her eldest daughter—and little Effie, had retired from Washington to the seclusion of the beautiful and romantic village of Winona, in Southern Maryland, where she was soon afterwards joined by a friend—Mrs. Germaine—whose husband, a great general, was away fighting the battles of his country. This lady—Mrs. Germaine—was the mother of Ida, Hal, and Dody, and they were all living together in the family of a minister, who, finding the house at Glen-Holme much too large and lonely for himself and gentle young wife, was so good as to rent a portion of it to Mrs. Germaine and Mrs.

Varney, and they were all very happy there together.

The young minister loved little children, and won their confidence by encouraging their innocent sports and cheerful prattle, even while he led their thoughts to God. It was a good thing to see them clustered around him in the bright lamp-light, laughing and chattering like magpies, talking to him about their boats, their dolls, their bows and arrows, their tops, puzzles, kitten, and a pet chicken belonging to Effie; while his fine face, which was full of frank, open-hearted kindness, turned first towards one and then the other, listening patiently, and answering all their quaint questions with a droll twinkle in his eye, which sometimes gave them a sly notion that he was laughing at them.

The rest of the family consisted of a tall, good-humored colored woman, who had nursed her mistress, Mrs. Vane, when she was left to her care, years before, by her dying mother, and who had clung faithfully to her, serving her with rare fidelity through her helpless

childhood, up to the present time. It was a proud day for her when she saw "her child," standing at the altar in her pure bridal robes, plighting her vows to Mr. Vane, who had been ordained but a short time before. Her name was Lydia, but that was long since merged into the more affectionate appellation of "Maumy." Besides Maumy, there was the cook, an old-timed family servant; two dogs, called Tip and Dixie; Mrs. Varney's maid, a nice brown girl of sixteen; the groom; and a very sober-looking bay horse, whom the children called "Old Sledge."

Now, little friends, having introduced you to the family of Glen-Holme, I must draw you a picture of its surroundings, and beg that you will be patient while I do so, for the strange and remarkable story of the "Snow Angel" is so interwoven with those scenes, that, to understand one, you must be familiar with the other. Glen-Holme, then, is situate in the plateau of a high and picturesque hill, which slopes down in brakes and dingles to the banks of a narrow river, whose waters go

surging and dashing over the rocks, through the very midst of Winona, with a roar that shakes the windows for a mile around. Beyond the turbulent stream and quaint village hill after hill arises, one above the other, covered with small plantations of beautiful trees, handsome country-seats, and farm-houses surrounded by broad, fertile acres and terraced gardens, while the topmost ridges, behind which the sun goes down, are fringed with grand old forest-trees and patches of cultivated ground, where trees and corn wave together against the sky. All this fine view stretches out in front of Glen-Holme. Back of it, the scene is very different. A declivity goes steeply and abruptly down from the portico, into a deep, romantic glen, through whose midst a rivulet dashes in sparkling cascades over mossy rocks. Beautiful and lofty trees of hickory, the native poplar, oak, and dogwood cluster thickly on the steep hillsides which form the Glen, and beneath their shade grotesque piles of granite, covered with every variety of moss and lichen, are scattered and grouped. Oh,

the jubilee of birds and rivulet that swell and tinkle together up the hillsides! the birds ha-ha-ing and sounding their clarions from the tree-tops; the rivulet, like a gay belle glittering in jewels, singing its merry waltzes, as it spins lightly over the gray rocks, dancing down through the mossy bottoms; through grasses lush with moisture; through pasture folds still rich with verdure, and under thickets where, in the spring-time, the blue-eyed violets and the "Star of Bethlehem" first bloom.

In addition to the attractions of the place, the minister has swung between two old trees on the brow of the hill, just where there is a more gentle slope than elsewhere into the Glen, an African hammock, such as the African kings sleep in, and thither the children delight to go and swing when let loose from their daily tasks. And it is all the better, they think, when Miss Varney can be coaxed to go out with them; for not only is impartial justice administered as to the number of swings each one is to get, but merriment and fun wax high, and the quiet inmates of Glen-Holme feel as-

sured, as the clear peals of laughter ring out upon the air, that peace reigns among the little ones. Ida and Effie sometimes treat their dolls to a swing in the hammock, and occasionally to an excursion in the Glen, where they keep house under the rocks, watched shyly by the ground-squirrels, whose rightful domain it is, and whose little round eyes shine out from the crevices in their dark abodes like sparks of fire.

If you remember, friends, Effie found herself very lonely in the parlor, and left it in great haste to go in search of the little Germaines, but she could find none of them except Ida; "Hal and Dody," Maumy informed them, "was done gone over the hill with Tip and Dixie, and if they all didn't break their necks together it would be a mercy." With this satisfactory information, the little girls gathered up their dolls, their housekeeping furniture, and last, though not least, their luncheon, and went down to their favorite haunt under a great overhanging rock, where the velvety mosses cling in rich folds adown its sides. Effie had

brought her mamma's little hearth-broom, and they swept the floor of their grotto, and in a short time had arranged every thing in the nicest order ; but after playing putting their house to rights, they thought it would be nice to have a pic-nic for their dolls ; so they gathered up all that they needed, and selected a flat rock near their castle, which was nicely covered with lichens, and above which outspread a handsome tree, from whose boughs hung trailing vines of the crimson trumpet-flower. The dolls were seated in a mossy nook, with their tiny work-baskets on their knee, and were supposed to be engaged in crochet, and embroidery, and instructive conversation, while Ida and Effie busied themselves in tastefully arranging the banquet. Just at their feet the rivulet whirled, foamed, and danced around the rocks, as if in a perfect delirium of fun, and Effie struck up and sang a merry little lay, which sounded very sweetly, with its rushing and tinkling music. Presently, quite out of breath, she said, " Ida, I'll tell you something which is very strange."

“What is it, Effie?” asked Ida, gravely, as she broke up a stick of candy.

“I don’t know—I’ll cut the oranges—but I think it’s a ghost. Maumy says it is.”

“Ghost, indeed! Who ever saw a ghost? I hope there are no ghosts at Glen-Holme. Who saw it?”

“Well, nobody *saw* a ghost, but there comes the oddest rapping around mamma’s room sometimes.”

“It’s nothing under the sun but the windows rattling,” said incredulous Ida. “We hear that constantly, and Mr. Vane says it is caused by the water falling over all these rocks; and the mill-dams.”

“No, it is not. Mamma says it is not, for she has to put wedges in her windows every night to keep them from drumming,” cried Effie, exultingly. “I heard Mr. and Mrs. Vane, and all of them, talking in our room last night about it, and in the midst of it there came a bouncing rap under the floor, just as if some one had done it with their knuckles. None of them knew what to make of it, and

Maumy and Fan are afraid to go up and down stairs by themselves at night," replied Effie, stoutly.

"I hope that you'll keep your ghost to yourself, Effie—I'm sure I should be scared out of my wits," laughed Ida. "Where are the cakes? Oh, here they are. Just look at the squirrels, Effie. I think there must be at least fifty of them."

"Don't let us scare them, and maybe when we get more used to them they'll come out and play with us," said Effie, gently.

"Oh, Effie, maybe they are fairies?" suggested Ida.

"Maybe they are," said Effie, gravely. "Don't let us hurt or scare them. Let us leave some cake and biscuit for them, and make believe to spread the table for them, just down there in the moss."

"Oh, yes, that will be nice; and if they are polite fairies, they will invite the birds. I'd like that, only the robins are so greedy, they'd gobble every thing up. Don't let us tell Hal and Dody; but, oh me, Effie! there they come

now, and Tip and Dixie with them. Now our fun is over; I wish they had not found us out," exclaimed Ida, quite in a flutter, as she began to gather the feast together for safe-keeping.

Sure enough, there they were, on the top of the hill, just above the peaceful pic-nic party, which they had discovered, with a shout of delight; and, never dreaming but that they were welcome, they prepared to join it, when, owing to some slip or misstep, they all fell together on the steep hillside, and came rolling, shouting, laughing, and barking together, boys and dogs, never stopping until they were launched right into the midst of the pic-nic arrangements. Head over heels they came, upsetting the dolls ignominiously, scattering the furniture, and spinning the feast into the rivulet. Effie and Ida barely escaped being knocked over by springing on a rock out of the way; the ground-squirrels scampered back to their burrows; the birds fluttered up to the highest tree-tops; and the two girls, their faces flushed with anger, stood on their rock of refuge, scolding like two enraged magpies.

“Let’s go and shake them both, Ida!” said Effie, with a determined air, “and whip Tip and Dixie. I expect our dolls’ noses are mashed flat.”

“So do I. Let’s go right after them. Here’s a stick for you, and here’s another for me,” responded Ida.

The council of war was short and decided, and they advanced in line of battle on the invaders, whose triumph was shortlived; for, seeing the uplifted sticks of the swiftly coming foe, they started at double-quick up the hill, the dogs covering the retreat, while their shouts of laughter only served to urge on their pursuers to greater exertions. But the boys had the best of the position, and at last, with a wild hurra of mirth and defiance, they made a sudden detour through the woods, and escaped. After having routed the invaders of their place, Effie and Ida returned to gather up their dolls, which had escaped all injury, to the great delight of their owners, and collect the fragments of the feast, and their furniture; after which, they re-

turned soberly home, full of indignation at their wrongs.

It was nearly dinner-time, and the minister, Mrs. Vane, and Mrs. Germaine, were in the dining-room, conversing about a pleasant book which Mrs. Varney had been reading aloud to them, when the two girls, with flushed cheeks, sparkling eyes, and angry countenances, came in, and, made eloquent by their wrongs, poured out with great earnestness the history of their adventures in the Glen. Mr. Vane and Mrs. Germaine laughed at the catastrophe; they had tried to look grave, but broke down, upon which Effie pouted, and Ida, getting red, said reproachfully, "You mightn't laugh at us, any how."

"Here they come now, dogs and all," said Effie, bridling up, while her eyes emitted flashes of indignation. Sure enough, in dashed the boys and dogs, and were about rushing pell-mell into the dining-room, when the minister met them at the door, and fixing his eyes gravely on them, said, "Hold up there, sirs. What is this mischief that you have all been doing in the Glen?"

"We didn't *go* to do any thing—eh—eh—look here, Mr. Vane: Dody and I—eh—was a-running with Tip and Dixie out there where—eh—it is so steep, and—and—" exclaimed Hal, out of breath.

"The truth now, Hal," said Mr. Vane.

"And"—continued Hal, his face flushing up—"and our feet slipped—eh—on the dry leaves, Mr. Vane, and Dody—eh—and I went a-rolling—eh—and Tip and Dixie too, and—eh—we all came rolling together, and—eh—didn't know where we were agoing until we—eh—went right head over heels into the baby-house. Didn't we, Dody?"

"Yes, we did so, Mr. Vane; and Tip took hold of my ear, and held on to it all the way down, and it hurt me—it did so," said Dody, with a solemn look on his broad, good-humored face. There was a burst of laughter, in which Effie and Ida condescended to join. Dody's ear was examined, and sure enough there were the prints of Tip's teeth, and Effie said, "Poor little Dode!" and reached round and pinched his other ear.

“There, now,” said Mrs. Germaine, “I knew, Ida, that the poor little fellows did not mean to break up your play. Boys and girls are so different in their dispositions that they don’t know how to play alike. You must never mind a thing unless harm is meant.”

“Dinner will be in presently, little folks,” said gentle Mrs. Vane. “Run up-stairs and see if there’s water in the pitchers and brushes on the toilet-tables.” They understood the hint, and were going out good-humoredly, when Mrs. Varney called to Effie, saying, “You will make up the morning’s loss, Effie, this afternoon. Lessons must not be neglected.” Lessons! Until that moment all hands had forgotten lessons, and they could say nothing but “Oh,” and “Oh, oh,” and make eyes at each other, as they huddled themselves together out of the door, forgetful of all disasters, in their confusion. But presently they came back looking as bright as new steel buttons, and so good and innocent that the minister’s heart was touched, and while he invoked the blessing of Heaven on its bounties, he silently

thanked God in his heart for brightening up the ways of life with the innocence of little children.

The bright, beautiful afternoon, filled with the songs of birds, the rustle of leaves, and the tinkling of the rivulet, and made brighter by the golden-winged butterflies that floated everywhere, was spent in-doors, over books and slates. They were patient, though, and got through in time to have a chase on the lawn, over which the golden rays of the setting sun slanted in tremulous brightness, and where the great trees made long shadows on the sward.

Then came tea-time, and a circle of happy faces surrounded the table, each one having some pleasant remark or cheerful word to add a charm to the hour. "Maumy" always waited on the table, and managed every thing behind her mistress's chair. Soon after the family sat down to tea, a gentleman came in to pay an evening visit, and was invited very cordially to take a seat at the table, which he did. After the little bustle was over, Maumy bridled up

behind Mrs. Vane's chair, and said in an undertone, which could not be distinguished or understood above the hum of conversation that was going on : "Miss Clara, why don't you ax the gentleman to have coffee? You axed him to take tea, and I just see him make a face at it."

"Excuse me, Mr. Randal, for not having asked you to take coffee. Perhaps you prefer it?" said gentle Mrs. Vane, quite shocked at her omission.

"Thank you, madam, if it is no trouble I will take coffee. Tea's poor stuff to an old coffee-drinker like myself," replied Mr. Randal.

"Didn't I tell you so, Miss Clara?" muttered Maumy, leaning slyly between Mrs. Vane and Miss Varney, who had a quiet laugh, unseen by the rest, at Maumy's tactics. A pleasant conversation was going on at the table to which the children were listening, when Mrs. Vane suggested to Maumy to hand the cake-basket around. "Don't, don't, Miss Clara," muttered the ever vigilant Maumy, while she pretended to arrange something on the tea-tray; "who

ever heard of handing cake 'till supper's most over?"

"Very well, Maumy, we'll wait a little longer," replied Mrs. Vane, while Miss Varney could scarcely restrain her mirth at the by-play. The next thing was:

"Don't you see his cup's most out ag'in, Miss Clara? But never mind, he's done had four, and I don't 'spect you'd better ax him. Now, Miss Varney, hand me the cake to parse round." While Maumy, with benign condescension, was 'parsing' the cake around, Mrs. Vane whispered: "Maumy is devoted to cake, and thinks that if it is handed around too early there'll be but little of it left. She believes that a hearty supper leaves but little appetite for cake."

"Prudent tactics," replied Miss Varney. "But to teaze Maumy I shall take a double slice on my plate, where I will leave it for her benefit. Watch her countenance, Mrs. Vane, while I help myself." Miss Varney very gravely appropriated two large slices of the delicious cake, and Maumy's first impulse was to draw

the basket suddenly away when she saw what she was after, but her "manners" prevailed, so far as to let her take possession of the coveted prize, while an expression, half astonishment, half displeasure, settled on her bronze features, and she remarked to Mrs. Vane, in her usual confidential tone: "It'll give her a ill turn, as sure as she's living, if she eats all that cake. It's very *on*wholesome, is sponge cake."

"Indeed, Maumy, I cannot have you interfering so. It is not nice of you. I am not a child, you know," remonstrated Mrs. Vane.

"I'd like to know what you is then? I reckon I nussed you, and larnt you every thing upon yearth that you knows. I spect you think you's as old as Methusaly, but you ain't," said Maumy, muttering. A pleasant conversation was going on at the lower end of the table, which, animated and cheerful, quite diverted every one's attention from the promptings of Maumy, and the subdued laughter of Miss Varney. Mr. Vane looked up that way two or three times, and by the quiet but merry

twinkle in his eye, they knew that he was aware of what was going on, for Maumy's doings on such occasions were quite a subject for mirth at Glen-Holme.

After tea the children played *loto*. Dody fell asleep on the floor, with Tip curled up in his arms. The ladies sewed, knitted, and conversed with Mr. Vane and his guest, who talked of the war, and the great battles that had been fought.

"I don't believe *he's* for the Union," whispered Effie to Ida, as they sat together at a table putting a dissected map of the United States together.

"Nor I either," replied Ida. "Didn't you hear him say just now: 'They'll never whip us if they try until doomsday.' I've a great mind to sing 'Red, White, and Blue' right out. I would if mamma hadn't told me so often that it is impolite to sing in company unless we are asked to."

"That's what mamma says too. But what do you think, Ida? Yesterday, when I was down the street, old Mr. Jay called me a Yankee; and

I told him 'yes, I was a Yankee, if it meant standing straight out for the Union.' ”

“Ha, ha!” laughed Ida. “What did old secesh say?”

“He said I was Southern born, and ought to be ashamed to take sides with the Yanks, and made fun of me.”

“What did you tell him?” asked Ida, leaning her arms on the table.

“I told him no, I wasn't ashamed of being true to my flag. I was born under it, and *he* was the one to be ashamed for taking sides with Jeff. Davis, who is trying to break up our country,” said Effie, her black eyes flashing.

“You didn't, though?” asked Ida, opening her great blue orbs to their full extent.

“Yes I did, too. Then I came home and told mamma.”

“What did she say?”

“She said it was not proper for little girls to talk politics; but she laughed and kissed me, and I knew she thought I was right.”

“I guess you are right,” said Ida. “*I* was

born in Florida, and they call me a Yank too, because I'm true blue."

"Don't you remember, Ida, before we came here what fun we had singing the 'Star-Spangled Banner' every time the secesh boarders sang 'My Maryland?' Don't you remember that as soon as they stopped we used to begin? Didn't we sing 'My Maryland' down, with Annie to help?"

"That we did. What made me the maddest though, they called my handsome little flag 'a disgraced rag;' then I pitched into old Jeff, I tell you."

"And then when the rebels crossed over into Maryland, didn't they think they were going to do great things? Don't you know we thought the house was on fire, secesh screamed and clapped their hands so; and one of them said to me, 'Now, Ida, you can see your little cousins in the South;'" and mamma, who was just coming by, said, 'she would prefer remaining with her father and brothers in the North, who are fighting the battles of their country.'"

"*My* mamma," said Effie, "put my flag right

out of the front widow over their heads, and said: 'If one hundred thousand rebels come, they shall see that *I* am not afraid of them, or ashamed of my flag.'"

"That was bully—oh, I didn't mean to say that; but it was. I guess they didn't sing 'My Maryland' after McClellan whipped the rebel army out of Maryland, foot, horse, and dragoons."

"No, we had some peace after that." Just then a little bell sounded. A silence fell on the cheerful circle. Mr. Vane opened a large book, and his clear, pleasant voice arose in solemn tones, reading the lesson of the day, which breathed of peace and hope; after which he offered up the evening prayer, invoking the blessing of God on all present, and His mercy on the world.

Little folks who live North can scarcely understand the fact that the loyal children of their own age, who live in the Border States, where opinions are, unhappily, so divided, are exposed to all sorts of trials from their young companions who wear the "Red and White."

They have to contend against rancor, hatred, and ridicule; while on the other hand they are not backward in defending their cause with equal spirit, and an intelligence and firmness which is remarkable. Thus a spirit of ill-will and unkindness has been kindled in the innocent hearts of children, where peace should dwell, by the sin of secession; and it is not the least crime on the catalogue against it, for whosoever doeth ought to offend or injure the innocence of little ones, "it were better for him that a millstone were hung about his neck and he were drowned in the depths of the sea." Mistress Knut could tell you many things about the trials of the Union children in Maryland, but you have been so patient throughout this introductory chapter, that she will as soon as possible introduce you to the Snow Angel.

CHAPTER II.

THE SNOW ANGEL.

“Advent—sou’west winds and flowers,” said a lady, who was making a call at Glen-Holme. “The most remarkable weather for this season of the year that I ever knew, Mrs. Varney.” Then with a merry little laugh, which proved how well pleased she was with the aspect of things, she tripped into her carriage, upon the front seat of which rested a basket filled and running over with roses, geranium leaves, and chrysanthemums, which a lady at “Swallow Barn” had given her from the flower-garden.

After Effie recited her lessons she got permission to spend an hour or two in the glen. Ida and the boys had gone with their mamma and Mrs. Vane in the carriage to pay some visits at a distance. Mr. Vane was in his

library, assorting some old coins. Miss Varney was in the parlor, trying her best to teach the African parrot to whistle Dixie, but he only ruffled up his plumage, and looked with sullen displeasure on her attempts. A farmer called to see Mr. Vane, by whom he was welcomed with genial hospitality. Effie, in skipping down stairs, burst a button off her sack, and ran into the parlor to ask her sister to pin it for her; and while Miss Varney was supplying the place of the lost button, and giving Effie a little lecture, in an undertone, about her carelessness, the farmer said: "The wheat crop will be very fair, sir, if we have snow in time. These warm spring-like days and frosty nights turn the wheat out of the earth. I wish we could have a regular, old-fashioned, deep snow."

"I wish so, too," thought Effie, as she ran out. "It would be so jolly to go coasting down the slope of the lawn on Hal's sled, and to play snow-ball with each other. Then the snow is beautiful; and besides that, Mr. Vane would give us a sleigh-ride. Won't I be glad though

when the old woman begins to pick her geese, and the sleigh-bells begin to jingle !”

It was in truth the middle of Advent, and the weather continued as mild as spring. The leaves had nearly all fallen from the trees, and the hill-sides looked as if carpeted with rich stuffs of russet and crimson. Chrysanthemums, dahlias, the fall roses and carnations, were in glorious bloom in the flower-gardens. Improvident birds still lingered and warbled among the evergreens. Yellow butterflies flittered hither and thither, as if the jonquils and daisies were in bloom. Bees hummed in the air, and the flies had not yet sought their winter-quarters. The rivulet dashed over the rocks, filling the glen with the sound of its laughter, and the old brown-squirrels stretched themselves sadly on the lichens and moss, as if they had come to grief ; but the young ones thought the late summer splendid, called their fathers and mothers “old muffs,” and said they were just making themselves miserable about nothing. Effie sat on a rock above one of the little cascades, watching their gambols. She wished

she could only understand what they were saying to each other! She certainly heard a low tiny murmur, and saw them put their heads together and nod, then turn round and go here and there, as if they were obeying orders; but she could not make out any more for want of understanding their lingo."

Presently there came along an old gray-squirrel—a squirrel of standing, she judged, from the marks of deference that were shown him—and he walked slowly, with a grave and anxious look on his countenance, until he came to a sheltered, mossy nook, where they all gathered around him and heard what he had to say. Then they all appeared much agitated, and went away in different directions to their homes.

"Something's up," said Effie. "That old fellow has brought ill news. I wish I knew what he said!" But her curiosity could not be gratified; so she turned to, and made boats of the dried leaves, and sent them sailing down the stream, to be dashed over into the cataracts and wrecked. Then she made a dam across

the rivulet, and wet her apron. Then she hung it on the rocks to dry. Then she played bridge, by hauling from the hill-top the decayed limb of a tree which had been lying there since the winter before—which she managed at last to throw across the streamlet—and, after wiping the perspiration from her face, she began to walk triumphantly over it; but, alas! the wood was rotten, the bridge snapped in half, and she found herself standing up to her knees in water.

“Pshaw!” exclaimed Effie, quite disgusted, “I do wish it would snow and freeze; then I’d slide on you, and not get wetted either.”

“What’s de matter, young Missis? ’Pears to me you’s wet.”

“It appears so to me too,” replied Effie, as she stepped out of the water, shaking her dress; “but I’d like to know where you are, Uncle Neb?”

“Here I is, little Missis,” replied the voice, and an old negro man, who had been sitting on the bank above her, watching her movements while he rested himself, slung his saw over his

shoulder, and, taking up his wood-horse, came slowly down the narrow pathway.

“How are you, Uncle Neb? You don’t get many aches this nice weather, do you?”

“Few aches, honey, an’ fewer jobs, ’case, you see, nobody’s gwine to have wood sawed sich weather as this. De fact is, we wants snow. ’Taint nat’ral like, here nigh on to Christmas, this sort of weather. Ah, little Missy, I often heerd that a ‘green Christmas makes a fat churchyard.’”

“I should think old people would like the warm sunshine, Uncle Neb,” said Effie, giving her dress another vigorous shake.

“’Taint good for de grain,” observed Uncle Neb, feeling the edge of his saw. And he might have added, nor good for his business; for Uncle Neb was *the* wood-sawyer of Winona whom every one employed who used wood for fuel; but, up to this time, only a stray job or two had fallen to his lot, on account of the remarkable mildness of the weather. “But you had better run home, chile, and dry your clothes; you’s jest as wet as a drowned rat.”



"I believe I will go now, Uncle Neb," replied Effie, wringing the water out of her skirts.

"Good-by, chile. I hope you won't have de croup," said the old man, as he toiled up the steep, rocky hill.

"Thank you. Poor old fellow! he can hardly tug up that hill. If I wasn't so wet, I'd go and take his wood-horse along for him. Uncle Neb! What a name! Nebuchadnezzar! It seems to me such a name's enough to kill its owner."

When Effie got home, a lady was taking leave of her mother at the hall-door, and after she was settled in her carriage, she said: "I am going home, Mrs. Varney, to pray for snow; for I am just dying to use my new sleigh. It is a swan with beautiful silver mountings. I shall certainly come for you the first fall of snow we have;" and off she was whirled.

"Oh, Effie!" said Mrs. Varney, "*where* have you been to get so wet?"

"My bridge broke, mamma, and I went in. Indeed I could not help it."

"Run directly up, and tell Fan to give you

dry things, and change your stockings and shoes immediately," exclaimed Mrs. Varney. "I almost wish that it would snow."

"I wish so too, ma'am. Here's almost Christmas, and not a feather, nor yet a flake! I'd like to know whatever sort of Christmas it's going to be without snow!" observed Maumy, who had come to the hall-door to get a glimpse of the visitors.

"It will snow in good time, Maumy," said Mrs. Varney, quietly, as she went in.

"It just seems to me that everybody is getting crazy about snow. I never heard so many people wishing for snow in all my life," thought Effie, as, with Fan's help, she got on her dry things. "It *would* be nice to coast, and snow-ball, and all that, but there are all my poor little pets in the glen, the birds, the butterflies, and the squirrels; they'd all die, poor little things, and I think it's downright unkind for everybody to be wishing for snow." Then she told Fan of her adventures in the glen, and they were in high glee over them, when Mrs. Varney came and said: "Effie, it seems to me

that it will be best for you not to go so much into the glen. The wind is chilly although the sun shines so warmly, and you can't exercise sufficiently there to keep you from taking cold. I shall not permit it hereafter."

"Oh, mamma! what shall I do if you stop my going there? It's all that I care for."

"Not *all*, I hope, darling! I don't mean that you shall *never* go. I only mean not so frequently. You are a heedless little girl, and I must take good care of you. Come, now, get out Dolly's nightgown, and sew a little."

"It is so very tiresome," said Effie, shaking herself: "I shall never get it finished."

"It was a fair agreement, Effie, was it not, that if I gave you a new wax doll, you would make all of its clothes nicely? Remember, I am to cut out and baste, you are to stitch, hem, gather, put in sleeves, cord, and do every thing as neatly as if you were doing it for yourself."

"Yes, mamma, I remember," said Effie, reluctantly.

"Very well. Fetch the nightgown, and I will show you what is next to be done."

"Here it is, mamma, but you see I don't know how to put on the yoke," said Effie, despondingly.

"Why this is *very* neatly sewed, Effie. I think Dolly will be proud of it when it is completed. I have some neat edging that I will give you for the collar and cuffs. See how much you have got done by just sewing a little each day."

"Yes, indeed, mamma," said Effie, now quite in the spirit of the thing; "and I do believe I can finish it by dinner-time—don't you?"

"To be sure you can, if you work steadily. By learning how to make Dolly's clothes neatly, you'll be able in another year to make your own."

"Oh, mamma, shall I? or are you only in fun?"

"I am certainly not in fun, daughter. Your clothes are of a larger pattern than Dolly's—that is all. Don't you see that they are cut out precisely like yours?"

"Why, yes, mamma! I did not notice that before." Then Effie set herself steadily to

work, chatting pleasantly with her mother, who patiently arranged the difficult parts for her; and sure enough, by dinner-time the handsome little cambric nightgown was finished, prettily and neatly, and Effie's nimble fingers had done every stitch of it.

That night the children all spent the evening together in Mrs. Varney's room, where there was a grand undressing of the doll; and they all declared that she was far more beautiful in her nightgown than in her showy ball-dress. Only there was no bed for her to sleep on. That was a great pull-down to the pleasant illusion, the having no bed.

"Oh, well, never mind," suggested Ida; "fold up the plaid shawl, and get two clean pocket-handkerchiefs for sheets. That will do splendidly."

This plan was adopted by acclamation, and Dolly, in all the glory of her new nightgown, was put comfortably to bed, her eyes were closed, and she was supposed to be asleep and dreaming, to the intense satisfaction of the children.

“I hope and trust that the dear Christ-child will bring me a bedstead,” said Effie. “A bedstead for Estelle—I wish everybody wouldn’t keep on calling her Dolly—a bedstead, and a kitchen with a stove and gridirons, frying-pans, and tubs and washboards—”

“And contrabands to do the work,” suggested Hal.

“Of course I must have servants,” replied Effie, laughing.

Then the children fell to talking about Christmas-trees. Effie had always had one at home, but Mrs. Varney looked sad when it was talked of, for some dear and loved faces that had gathered around the last Christmas-tree were now sleeping their last sleep in the grave. Mrs. Germaine did not know how it would be for her children. A great battle was daily and hourly expected: her brave husband and sons would be exposed to its fury and perils. She felt but little heart for festivities of any sort. The minister was preparing a celebration for his Sunday-school children. There was to be a great Christmas-tree there, and an exhibition

of a splendid magic lantern ; after which the children were all to sing a Christmas carol. The uncertainty which hung over the prospects of the little folk at Glen-Holme about the Christmas-trees, clouded their holiday anticipations very much, and it was a great relief to them to have Mr. Vane's festival to chat about. Ida had a copy of the Christmas carol, and read it aloud. Then they tried to sing it, and would have succeeded, only Dody, who knew but one tune—and that was "Dixie's Land"—would sing that, which put the rest out, and made a perfect Dutch concert of the attempt, which ended in uproarious laughter ; in the midst of which the prayer-bell rang, and they separated for the night.

Ere many days, Mrs. Vane, who was extremely nice and systematic in her housekeeping, and who knew how to make all sorts of delicious things, began her preparations for the holidays. Mrs. Germaine, Miss Varney, and Mr. Vane went into the city early one morning after breakfast to shop, and did not return until night. There was a mystery of some

sort on foot. Miss Varney, and Fan, who had accompanied the ladies to the city, looked immensely loaded under their cloaks ; and Effie and Dody, who were in Mrs. Varney's room playing graces, were sent down-stairs on some pretence or other. Then the wardrobe was unlocked, and, with great secrecy, several large bundles were put away and covered up. Mrs. Germaine also sent her children down-stairs, and her door was locked for one long hour. They were on the tiptoe of expectation ; but when they came up, what did they find ? Nothing under the sun except the trunk which held their summer clothes, the bedstead, dressing-table, bureau, chairs, and stove, just precisely where they had left them. They had their suspicions, but as they were not in the habit of prying into their mamma's affairs, as some children do, they did not tease her ; besides which, they had an idea that it was best to be on their good behavior at a time when it was but natural to suppose that Christingle was about. But they held their secret conclaves—never doubt that—held them in cor-

ners, on the stairs, in the hall, and by the fire-side ; and wondered, told marvellous tales they had heard of good old Christmas times, and related their own experience to each other, until their tongues were fairly tired out.

One morning after breakfast it was announced to the children that they were to have their Christmas-tree. Effie was to have a holly tree, and the Germaines a cedar. A man had been spoken to, who had promised to fetch them on Christmas eve. Then, as you may imagine, there arose a hubbub of gladness at Glen-Holme ! It was like the bursting of a bottle of spruce-beer, and there was no end to the uproar ; so they were turned neck and crop out of doors, where they could shout and cut up to their hearts' content. Mrs. Germaine and Mrs. Varney had talked a great deal about the disappointment of the little folk, and the day before they had come to the conclusion to lay aside their cares for a season, for their sakes. They knew well, these tender mothers, that sorrows and trials would meet the little ones soon enough in their onward

march of life, and they thought that it was not well to dim a single ray of happiness which, by right of innocence, was theirs ; or throw out of the natural order any of the simple joys incident to childhood. "Let us make them happy, poor little souls, while we may. To be deprived of their blithesome enjoyments cannot undo the sad past for you, my friend, or avert the dreary possibilities of my future," said Mrs. Germaine.

The Germaines got letters from their brothers containing bank-notes ; and the general wrote word to his wife to make the children as happy as possible. Effie also received a letter from her brother in Washington, full of Christmas promises. They were all very happy, and, after lessons, got permission to go into the glen for a romp, accompanied by Tip and Dixie. It was nearly sunset when they returned to the house. They had missed Effie, and thought that she had gone in ; but the child had wandered away to one of her favorite haunts behind the rocks, where she was sitting, silent and thoughtful, watching the squir-

rels, who seemed to be in great trouble and agitation about something. She did not observe that dark clouds had gathered in the sky, dark slate-colored clouds, and that it had grown much colder. The hill and trees had hidden them from her, and she was so intent on watching the squirrels, and wishing she could understand the language of beasts and birds, that she did not feel the chilly gusts of wind that whirled the crisp leaves in eddies around her. Suddenly a large snow-flake fell on her hand, and, looking up, she saw others fluttering softly down, like little white doves; but they melted as soon as they fell. But she sat watching them till one fell in each of her eyes, making her start, and wink, and finally laugh, it was such an odd freak; but when she looked up, after drying her eyelashes, she saw, to her great amazement, a tall, slender maiden, robed in white transparent draperies, standing before her. Her eyes were gray and soft; her hair was a pale golden color, and it fell rippling back from her forehead over her shoulders. A circlet of tiny diamonds sur-

rounded her head. Her face was very white; her hands, her bosom, and throat were like alabaster. Her lips were delicately tinted with rose, and a sweet smile rested upon them.

“Effie, did I not hear thee just now wishing to understand the language of nature?” she inquired sweetly.

“I should like to know very much what the squirrels and birds say to one another,” replied Effie, who arose and spoke with great politeness as well as timidity, for she was awed, if not downright frightened, by the singular apparition.

“Thou shalt have that gift bestowed on thee, child, on one condition,” replied the spirit-maiden, gently.

“I will do any thing that you wish—if it is not wrong,” added Effie, in great haste.

“My child, if I were to *suggest* wrong to thee, my spotless robes would be stripped from me, and I should have to wander forever among evil spirits,” responded the being solemnly.

“Who are you?” asked Effie. “Are you

my sister Florence, who went to heaven years ago?"

"No. I am not thy sister Florence. She is one of the birds of God," and here the beautiful being bowed her head in reverence of that great name. "I am not she, but I wish to bestow a gift on thee, because thou art tender and kind to animals. But to have this gift, the secret of it must not be revealed to any mortal ear."

"Not to my mamma, even?" asked Effie, doubtingly.

"Not even to her, until I give thee permission. It will lead thee into no harm, child. If it were so, I should not be permitted to impart it."

"I am almost afraid," said Effie to herself. "It will seem strange not to tell mamma; but I *must* hear what the squirrels and birds say—there can be no harm in it. I promise what you desire, lady. I will not let any one know of my gift."

The beautiful being smiled, then took from the folds of her robe a tiny crystal flask con-

taining a pale-blue liquid. She poured a drop or two of this on her finger, and touched Effie's ears with it. At that moment a great gust of wind whirled the dead leaves up in a perfect tumult around the child, almost blinding her; and when they fell once more, rustling and whispering to the earth, she saw that she was alone.

"Oh, the beautiful, lovely lady!" she exclaimed. "I do hope that I shall see her again!" Just then she heard the tiniest, funniest little voice that was ever listened to, say: "That was the SNOW-ANGEL, Effie, and we are all wild with joy at seeing her. Run home now, or you will take cold, little friend."

"Who could that be? Where did it come from? What in the world is it?" thought Effie, looking round and round, and up and down. But she saw nothing except the bare branches nodding over her head, the rivulet shivering and fretting itself in a rage over the rocks, and the withered leaves hurtling, muttering, and whirling about her feet. Nothing else, except a pair of piercingly bright little

eyes peeping out of a crevice in the rock, about which the moss was hanging like a curtain, and two long, white teeth, which looked mightily as if the owner of them were in a broad laugh.

“It was I who spoke, Effie,” said the owner of the eyes and teeth, emerging from the mossy curtain that hung before the door of his dwelling. “I am the governor of the ground-squirrels, who all love you for your kindness to us. Don’t you remember the day that you drove off those fierce lions (he meant Tip and Dixie, the poor little midge) who had pursued one of our family so ferociously, that she stumbled and would have been torn to pieces but for you? That was my daughter.”

Effie laughed merrily—she could not help it—to see how the little creature had come out on the moss and reared himself on his hind legs, with his right hand on his breast, bowing and making the most oratorical flourishes and gestures.

“Excuse me for laughing, governor,” said Effie, full of mirth. “I mean no harm, and

am delighted to make your acquaintance. Depend upon it, the lions shall never harm you or any of your people, if *I* can help it."

"A thousand thanks!" replied the ground-squirrel, or, we should say, the governor, bowing to the ground. "We shall not be in such dread of them now that the Snow-Angel has come, for—" He did not finish his sentence, for at that instant Tip came leaping and bounding into the glen, with a succession of fierce barks, followed by the shouts of "Mau-my," and the more quiet and distinct calls of Mr. Vane, who had come to look for Effie; and the governor sprang backwards. There was a whisk of his tail, a tremulous shiver among the moss, and he had disappeared in the recesses of the rock.

"Why, Effie, you look as happy as a queen," said Mr. Vane, coming up; "but you have given us all great uneasiness."

"I am sorry for that, Mr. Vane. I have been watching the ground-squirrels and things, and did not know it was so late," she replied.

"Ground-squirrels ain't a coming to nuss

you if you has de croup to-night, as I expects you will," put in Maumy, irately. "I never heerd of sich a thing! De nasty little varmint, gnawing, and nibbling, and undermining every thing about de place! I wish Tip and Dix here could destroy de whole kit and posse of 'em."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Maumy, to be so cruel," said Effie, excitedly, as she let go of Maumy's hand. "It is not right to be cruel to dumb things—is it, Mr. Vane?"

"No," replied Mr. Vane, decidedly. "It is very wicked and cowardly. But Maumy knows well enough that she'll have to take it out in talk, so far as her designs against the ground-squirrels go. I doubt if she wouldn't beat Tip soundly if she caught him wronging one of your little brown favorites, Effie."

Maumy chuckled to herself, and said: "Better not trust to that, sir. I ain't no friend to any sort of varmint."

"Effie, you will have to warn your friends against this ogress," said Mr. Vane, laughing.

“I will, sir,” replied Effie, gravely. Then she bethought herself of her promise to the Snow-Angel, and said: “I shall try to keep Tip and Dixie from hunting any of them, they are such wee soft things.”



CHAPTER III.

THE GHOST.

EVERY one expected to see the earth and the house-tops covered with snow the next morning ; but, to the surprise of all, the sun shone out resplendently, there was not a cloud to be seen, and there was no snow, not a drift, or patch, or flake, to be seen high or low, but, as usual, there was a heavy hoar-frost.

“ The wheat crops will suffer severely if this goes on,” observed the minister at the breakfast-table. “ I was in hopes of an old-fashioned snow.”

“ And I of a drive in Mrs. Hampstead’s new sleigh,” said Mrs. Varney.

“ I expected to have a bully time coasting,” cried Dody. “ We was a going to make a snow-man—Hal and I—and forts, and we was going to snow-ball everybody, right and left.”

"Oh, pshaw! I never saw the like! A fellow can't have a bit of fun without snow," said Hal. "I wish it would snow and snow for ten weeks."

"Hold on, Hal," said Mr. Vane. "We shall have to send you out among the Esquimaux if you wish such things as that. The snow will come in good time, little ones, depend upon that. He who sends us sunshine, will also send the snow when He sees best. Now tell me, who wants to take a ride with Jem in the wagon, to cut evergreens for the church and the festival?"

"I," and "I," and "I"—all volunteered to go, but only the two boys were accepted; so they were buttoned up in their overcoats and wrapped in comforters, and went on their way rejoicing. There was a great stir in the house all day. Every one seemed bent on some important business, and nobody told what anybody was doing; and, in fact, the amiable inmates of Glen-Holme seemed to be getting a little snappish towards each other. As to Effie, she cared very little about what was going

on. She was so happy in her strange gift, that it seemed as if she saw every thing through diamond glasses ; all the world was so wonderfully brightened up, every one appeared so much more beautiful than formerly, and her affections glowed so warmly towards all living things, that she never felt so happy in all her life. But Mrs. Varney had laid an interdict on her going down into the glen for some time to come ; she had taken cold, and was a little feverish all the day following. That night her fever was so high, that her mamma watched her until morning, when it abated, and, except that she was more quiet through the day, she seemed to be as well as usual. Every one in the house continued busy, and, about this time, the mysterious whisperings and doings were on the increase. Ida Germaine was having patterns cut, and had sent out to buy bran. Mrs. Varney was busy with rose-colored merino and floss silk, which she hid under a towel whenever any one came in. Mr. Vane was a great deal in his library in consultation with Mrs. Vane, and sometimes Miss Varney was invited

in ; and from her clear peals of laughter that rung merrily out through the closed door, every one knew that something very amusing was in preparation. Mrs. Germaine made another trip to the city. As to "Maumy," she was a perfect Herod among the eggs ; one would have supposed she was bent on the destruction of some venomous reptile concealed in an egg-shell, and not being able to find the exact one, was determined on the destruction of all, rather than miss it. A great chopping was heard steadily going on in the lower regions, and Tip and Dixie were frequently heard howling out of the kitchen, pursued by the cook with a meat-fork in her hand. The house was full of savory smells ; and Dody told the other children, in confidence, that he had "peeped into the pantry, and saw thousands of pies and tarts, and a great pile of yellow jelly, that looked like big lumps of glass." You must understand that Dody was only five years old, which will account for his peculiar ideas of figures, as well as grammar. He would very often declare that he saw ten thousand birds,

when perhaps he had seen a flock of fifteen or twenty ; and it was always great fun for the children, who knew that he did not mean a lie by it.

There was only one drawback to the general satisfaction, and that was, that it did not snow. This was all for a few days, and the children thought it was enough too, until, amidst all the hubbub of domestic happiness, news came that a terrible battle was being fought in Virginia. The bulletin said that General Germaine led the advance—which he always did—but nothing more. His brave sons fought by his side ; one being on his staff, and the other, who had already been wounded in a former battle in defence of the honor of his flag, commanded a battery in the general's division ; so that mother and friends knew that they were all under the deadly fire of the enemy. Then a quiet and sadness fell on the household. Mrs. Germaine fell ill with anxiety and dread, and the children, silent and dejected, knew not what terrible things to expect. Various rumors reached Mr. Vane, but nothing certain

was known for long, weary hours, except that the national forces had been repulsed with great slaughter. “*Ten thousand* dead and missing,” said the papers. “The enemy fought behind breastworks on the summit of a range of hills. Our brave troops, in their efforts to storm that long range of fortifications, were mowed down by thousands, and compelled to abandon it.” No tidings, for two days, as to who escaped or who fell. At last a letter came. The minister brought it himself from the post-office; and not knowing whether it brought tidings of grief or joy, almost dreaded to deliver it to Mrs. Germaine, whose thin cheek flushed as she tore it open with trembling, eager fingers. “All’s well with me and the boys,” were the first words that greeted her eyes. Then tears of thankfulness and joy blinded her, so that, for a little while, she could read no more. The joyous outcries of the children quickly spread the news from garret to cellar at Glen-Holme. “The general and his sons are alive, and not even wounded,” was told from one to another, and all rejoiced. But

that was not all. In their frantic delight the children had gone off without hearing what followed, which was this : “ We have escaped from that awful carnage without a scratch, and we shall be with you, on short leave of absence, at Christmas.”

Then the little ones grew wild in their joy. It was all like the sudden breaking up of ice in a sun-lit torrent ; such a jostling, turning head over heels, dancing, and flying round and round, and such a Babel of sounds, amidst which Tip and Dixie were heard almost breaking their hearts barking, surely never was seen or heard. It was the children’s day after that, and all at Glen-Holme sympathized so sincerely with Mrs. Germaine in her joy, that they held the reins until the prayer-bell rang that night. They were too young, those children, to think of any thing beyond the joyful fact that father and brothers had escaped, almost by a miracle, the deadly perils of that battle ; or to look away at the dead and dying soldiers left on the field, or at the broken hearts in their desolated homes. But when the quiet

night came, and the little ones had gone to rest, many were the gentle and tender words uttered by the family circle at Glen-Holme ; many were the tears shed to the memory of the brave who fell that bloody day, and earnest were the prayers that ascended to the Father of all, to implore His assistance and consolation for the bereaved and suffering everywhere.

“Mamma, why is there such joy for little children whenever Christmas comes ?” inquired Effie the next day, as she sat sewing beside her mother.

“Because, daughter, the Saviour came in the guise of a little child. He consecrated and dignified childhood, by becoming himself a child. Now all Christians honor the childhood of Jesus, by making a joyful festival for children on the day of his nativity. It is because He was a child. The angels of heaven sang a great song of joy as they descended to adore Him in His humble crib. The kings of the East came, bearing Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh ; and adored Him along with the humble shepherds, who offered Him the young

lambs of their flocks. It is the childhood of Jesus which is honored in all that is done to make children happy at Christmas. Many people do not think of this, but by far the greater number do. Let us think of it, darling."

"I wish *I* had been there. *I* would have offered Jesus all I had—every thing!" said Effie.

"Offer *yourself* to Him, my little daughter, and try to become like Him, meek and humble of heart, and guileless in speech and manner," said Mrs. Varney, laying her arm about Effie.

Effie felt this. She knew that she was neither meek nor humble, but quick of temper, sometimes rude, and occasionally disobedient. But new thoughts stirred within her, and she determined that, in the solemn and joyous festival now so near at hand, she would offer herself at the crib, and try to become more like the Divine Child.

Effie had a singularly vivid imagination, which led her into odd conceits. Between sleeping and waking, she sometimes had

strange and unearthly dreams, and nothing could convince her for a time that they were not real. When things were pictured to her imagination very vividly, she firmly believed that every thing had happened just as she fancied it; nor could Mrs. Varney make her understand how it was that her imagination deceived her, because Effie could not understand what imagination was. She delighted in fairy tales, and read them with a simple faith in their truthfulness that nothing could shake; and she frequently amused the other children by telling them the most wonderful stories, which she composed as she went on—telling them so earnestly, that it was plain to see she, at least, believed what she was saying.

No snow had come yet. Clear blue skies, brilliant sunshine, mild days, and bitterly cold nights, with heavy frosts, continued. Effie heard Mr. Vane say there was much suffering among the poor, for every thing was up at war prices, and it just made paupers of those who were thrown out of employment by the stopping of manufactories, mills, and other failures,

and all charitable and benevolent persons were doing what they could for the relief of the sufferers. But Effie had no actual knowledge of the poor, except a soldier's widow whom her mamma relieved from time to time, and to whose little ones Effie's outgrown garments found their way; and an old black woman in the glen, who was nearly one hundred years old, the mother of Uncle Neb, who, I am sorry to say, was not a very dutiful son. The children said it was because he was so old that he forgot that Maum Gracy was his mother; and maybe it was, for the old fellow was in his seventy-sixth year! Mrs. Vane and all the Glen-Holme family were very kind to Maum Gracy, and sometimes Effie and Fan would carry wine and other nourishing things to the poor old creature. Sometimes Effie would go alone, and in the excess of her kindness she'd go out and gather fagots to make her fire; then set to and sweep her room; and come home with her feet damp, her dress torn, her face covered with coal-dust, and her hair filled with ashes. She was so vigorous in all that she undertook,

that it was no unusual thing for her to come to grief. As one day, when Maum Gracy was very sick, she asked Effie to give her a sup of coffee from the bowl that sat near the fire, and, in her eagerness to oblige her, she poured the hot coffee down her throat, almost strangling her, and was so frightened at what she had done and the outcry made by Maum Gracy, that she dropped the bowl, spilling its contents in the old woman's bosom. Effie was very sorry, but she laughed because Fan did, and they both did all that they could to dry and comfort her ; but she was in a great rage with them, and bade them go home and never dare to show their faces there again. So that put an end to Effie's philanthropic plans for the time being. She did, however, go to see Maum Gracy again. She went with Mrs. Vane, to beg her pardon for her carelessness, for she was really sorry for what had happened, although she meant no harm ; and she was restored to favor. After this she gave her some pennies every week from her pocket-money. But in all her various occupations and amuse-

ments, in all the excitement about Christmas, and the preparation and talk that was going on, she never forgot the Snow-Angel and the "governor." She longed to see them once more, and to hear the squirrels and birds talk. The African parrot could talk, but he only repeated what others said, in English; all his thinking talk was African lingo, that nobody could understand. But Mrs. Varney was positive about the glen. She said that Effie had a slight fever every night, which Mrs. Germaine and the rest thought must be a mistake resulting from her over-anxiety about the child, because during the day she was the merriest and most blithesome of the little folk, with no sign of fever or lassitude about her. So Effie used to stand looking wistfully down on the lichen-covered rocks from her mamma's window, watching the gay stream dancing along, and envying the brown leaves that whirled and danced withersoever they listed. One night, after sitting pensive and silent for some time, with her head resting on her mamma's knee, and her kind hand folded in both her own,

thinking of the beautiful spirit-maiden, she got up and went to the eastern window, pushed back the chintz curtains, and looked out. An exclamation of rapturous delight burst from her lips.

“Is it snow, Effie?” asked Mrs. Varney.

“Oh, no, mamma, but something very beautiful. You know the hill on the other side of the glen, that seems to run right into the sky? Well, mamma, the full moon is resting exactly like a great golden bubble on the top of it; and the stars, mamma, some of them, look as if they were dancing on the rim of the hill, and others appear through the trees, like gold and silver fruit growing on the boughs. And away up, hundreds of others are glittering like eyes. Mamma, I do believe, if I were out there on the hill, I could touch the moon. It is just as bright as day in the glen, and I’d give any thing if I could just patter down there in my bare feet, to have a peep at the squirrels.”

“And have your little red toes bitten by the frost,” observed Miss Varney, laughing. “I am afraid, mamma, that the child will be a poet.”

“That would be glorious, mamma—would it not?” asked Effie, with her nose flattened against the window-pane.

“If you wrote glorious poetry it would be,” replied Mrs. Vane. “Bad poetry, that vitiates the taste, had better be left unwritten.” Effie did not listen to the discussion, for, as she gazed up at the stars and watched the magnificent moon rising slowly above the hill-top, she saw the Snow-Angel float over the glen—the Snow-Angel, but so like a wreath of mist, that she saw the stars glimmer through her shadowy raiment. But her luminous gray eyes were distinctly visible, and they lingered with a fond gaze on the child until she faded from view. Effie’s heart beat wildly: she stretched her hands towards the glen, and uttered a cry in which the longing and desire of her poor little heart found vent.

“You had better come to bed, darling,” said Mrs. Varney gently, for Effie had run to her mamma, and, burying her face in her bosom, had burst into tears.

“I declare, mamma, that child is so excitable,

she will have brain-fever if we don't take care. Come, little sister, let me unfasten your clothes and get you ready for a nice, long winter's nap." And Effie let herself be undressed. She was very quiet, and said her prayers as usual, but I am sorry to own that her heart was in a perfect tumult about the Snow-Angel, and it was long before she fell asleep, although her head was pillowed on her mother's bosom. The last thing she heard was : " She is feverish again to-night."

" What nonsense !" thought Effie. " I am as well as well can be," and then fairies and white roses began to float before her eyes. She was out dancing a quadrille with the stars on the hill-top—the stars, which winked and twinkled at her, and made the sweetest music as they tripped through the mazes of the dance. At last it all faded from her view, and she sank into a deep sleep, from which she was awakened by a mysterious rapping. One, two, three. One, two, three, four, five. One. Two. Three. And so it alternated—rapping and tapping. It seemed to be near her bed. She was thirsty,

and as her mamma was sleeping soundly she did not wish to disturb her, but got up without making the least noise, to get a drink of water from the table. The coal burned brightly in the grate, throwing a warm red glare all around; the taper twinkled under the shade, and every thing looked so cozy about the large room, that even the portrait of her blue-eyed sister, who had gone to heaven years before, seemed to smile more sweetly on her; and the violets, and hyacinths, and crocuses sent forth such a fragrance, that Effie felt more like having a dance over the soft carpet than going back to bed again: but she took her seat on the thick warm rug before the fire, stretched out her toes, and began to seek faces in the coals.

Tap, tap, tap, sounded against the panel. "That's the ghost," said Effie, looking around. She was startled, but seeing nothing, she began to hunt up the faces again. Tap, tap, tap, tap, tap! She got up and went over to the corner whence the taps proceeded, and knelt down to take a closer survey of the paneling, when lo! two little eyes, round, black,

and bright, twinkled at her through the shadows.

"How do you do, Effie?" said a small, tiny voice.

"How are you, governor? I am so glad to see you! Come in to the fire," cried Effie, joyfully. "You look cold, and have got very gray since I saw you last."

"Ah, young lady, the discontent of my people and the cares of State combined, are too much for me," said the ground-squirrel, as he took his seat before the fire, and curled his gray tail thoughtfully around him. The poor little fellow looked sad, and his beard and whiskers were almost white, while his cheeks hung loosely down on each side of his neck.

"I am sorry for you, governor," said Effie, smoothing his head with her finger; "but please tell me how you got here?"

"Our national granary is under this floor, young lady. I came up to make a reconnoissance, news having reached us that a savage army of rats were about to attack it, and I thought it most prudent to secure a safe re-

treat in case they came upon us suddenly. This was some weeks ago. A few days ago another rumor reached us, and I ordered our sappers and miners to open a passage up into the wall, and by mistake we have bored into your room. This is a beautiful, bright room," observed the governor, looking critically around.

"Don't make the hole so large that the rats can get through. There's nothing I am more afraid of," said Effie.

"Oh, no! we are better engineers than that. I fear we have disturbed you at night, for we have been obliged to move our provisions from the old place, and hickory nuts, when they rattle down the laths, make a great noise," he observed, benignly. Effie laughed until her black eyes swam in tears.

"And so it was you? We all thought it was a ghost. Maumy and Fan have been afraid of their lives to go up and down stairs at night, and Fan just tumbles from the top to the bottom, like a great rolling ball, if she hears the least scratch. Even Mr. Vane and mamma thought the raps very odd."

"I am sorry that we disturbed the family," replied the governor; "but it was a military necessity."

"Never mind now. I am only glad that it is not a ghost who does it," replied Effie. "How are your people?"

"In a very disgruntled, unhappy state," he said, with a sad countenance.

"I am sorry to hear it," replied Effie, pulling down a long face, while she wondered what "disgruntled" meant. "What is the matter with them?"

"They want snow, and we shall have no peace until it does snow; but *I* can't make it snow, and they seem to think that I can," exclaimed the poor little governor passionately. "The fact is, young lady, we are in a bad way. Every thing goes wrong. Even the great Wheat nation is in open rebellion—"

"Effie, my love," said Mrs. Varney, "what are you doing up?"

"I got up to get a drink of water, mamma," said Effie. "It is very nice here."

"I will tell you all about the trouble if you

will come into the glen to-morrow," whispered the governor.

"Bless me, Effie, did you see that mouse, dear?" exclaimed Mrs. Varney.

"No indeed, mamma, I did not see a mouse," replied Effie, laughing in her sleeve, as she snuggled down close to her mother's side. She could scarcely sleep for thinking of her strange interview with the old Governor of Squirrel-dom; and when she did, she slept so soundly that the prayer-bell did not awaken her the next morning at seven o'clock.



CHAPTER IV.

ALL FOR THE WANT OF SNOW.

AND when Effie did fairly get her eyes open, she saw no glad sunshine streaming through the oriel window near her bed; the blue sky was covered with an unbroken array of dark, slate-colored clouds, and the soft southerly wind had fled away before an easterly storm, which dashed its heavy rain-drops against the window-panes with great fury.

“Good for thirty-six hours, if a minute,” grumbled Maumy; “and by the time it’s over, honey, we’ll all be dead beat with the rheumatiz; and I’d like to know what sort of a Christmas we’s gwine to have? Come, Miss Effie, make haste and dress, you’re most always the last one down.”

“I don’t care if I am,” replied Effie shortly, “I have so many things to do.”

“Well chile, and is you never gwine to learn to do things spry? If you goes on creeping through the world that a’ away you’ll be a old woman afore you get half way ’cross: Lord sakes! you might a’ had on your stockings, and laced up your boots by this time. And you, Fan, you’s just as bad as she is, standin’ there swelling out your jaws a laughing; instead of hurrying of her up,” observed Maumy, with her hands resting on her hips. Fan dodged behind the bed-curtains, and Effie replied snappishly—

“I reckon, Maumy, you had best let me be. I’ll take scoldings from no one except my mother—so there!”

“Your mamma and sister is been down this hour, miss, and sent me up to tell you to make haste down. Now I done told you ’cordin’ to orders, and you can do just as you please,” replied Maumy, curtsying and opening the door. When she got out of the room she chuckled, and muttered: “Don’t them ’ere black eyes of her’n flash, though! Hiya! but she’s a peert one! I do wonder though what on the yearth

the chile ponders so about at that window! Go in when you will, if she's in thar, she's stuck at that window, looking out. Thar's nothing to see from thar now." Just then she met the Germaine children rushing from their bedroom door towards the staircase. "Look here, you all, is you just up? You shan't have one bit of breakfast, you sleepy-headed creturs."

"I guess we will, then," said Ida, reddening.

"You're a set of lazy toads—to-morrow morning, mind, I'll begin in yonder with Miss Effie, and go round and spank you every one out of bed," said Maumy, shaking her turbaned head at the children.

"I'd rather be a toad than a giraffe!" shouted Hal, jumping down two steps at a time.

"You are a pres-dij-i-po-tater," got out Dody with great difficulty. He had been one week trying to learn to say "prestidigitateur," and measuring its consequence by its length and his own labors, he hurled it at Maumy for a stunner! but instead of wincing, she made a dart at the group which sent them plunging down the staircase, and into the dining-room

at double-quick; laughing so merrily, and looking so bright, that the lecture which awaited them all from Mrs. Vane, was postponed to an indefinite period. She knew that they had seen her laugh when they came in, after which a lecture would have been breath wasted. Only she would not allow them to have hot waffles for breakfast. They pleaded and promised, but she was positive on that point, and they had to content themselves with cold biscuit.

"I like cold biscuits, Mrs. Vane," said Dody, with a broad smile on his good-humored face.

"I am glad that you do, Dody. You can have them *every* morning by coming down late," replied Mrs. Vane quietly.

"I don't like them, but I don't mind it much for once," said Ida, highly indignant.

"I like biscuit, either hot or cold," said Effie, tossing her head.

Hal, who had the useful faculty of submitting himself with great amiability to "the situation," whatever it might be, nibbled his in peace and without comment.

Every thing seemed to be at cross-questions

after breakfast. Effie, usually the ringleader in their sports, was silent and dull, and thought of nothing but of her disappointments about getting into the glen that day, of which it was plain to see there was no hope, on account of the storm. It was also very certain that if her respectable old friend, the governor, should venture out, he would surely come to grief. Even if it cleared off towards evening there was no possible way for him to cross the rivulet, which the rain had swollen into a creek, whose waters completely submerged the rocks, which formed natural bridges from one side to the other; and she feared that the rats would take advantage of the occasion to plunder the granary of her favorites. "I wish they knew how to make pontoons, poor little things!" she thought. But her thoughts were interrupted by a clamor of mirth. The boys had got into a gale of play; Tip and Dixie had sneaked in, and before one knew where one was there arose such a clatter and jumping, such laughter, shouting, romping, and general uproar, that the walls shook. The two dogs barked shrilly;

and Willie, the gray African parrot, shrieked "Huzza! huzza! shut the door! Kiss me, mistress! Effie! Whoop! Do—dee-e-e—! Huzza," and jumped into his ring, where he spun himself around with shrill screams. So sudden and contagious was the storm of fun, that Ida and Effie, before they knew what they were about, were flying over the chairs and under the tables with Tip and Dixie, while Hal and Dody followed in close pursuit. In the midst of it all, there came a crash! Some one, nobody could tell who, upset a valuable plant of Mrs. Vane's, and broke it off close to the root. There was a sudden pause; and, "Oh! ho!" "I didn't;" "You did it;" "No, it was Dixie;" "It was Dody;" "You jumped against the table, Effie!" "It was you, when you fell down, Ida!" burst individually and collectively from the "assembled multitude." At this crisis the door opened, and Mr. and Mrs. Vane, Mrs. Germaine, and Mrs. Varney came in, brought together from every part of the house by the uproar; the sound of the fallen flower-pot, and the sudden lull which succeeded, led them to fear that they

should find, instead of broken crockery, broken heads or limbs.

"Oh, my beautiful plant!" exclaimed Mrs. Vane. "Who did this mischief?"

No one spoke. "Speak, Effie!" said Mrs. Varney.

"I do not think that I did it, mamma!" said Effie, looking ruefully at the broken plant.

"Who did it, children?" inquired Mrs. Germaine.

"I do not know, mamma. If I did it, I do not know how!" replied Ida.

"I might," spoke up Hal, "eh—when I turned—eh—head over heels off—eh—the sofa. Tip—eh—was after me, and—and we rolled off together."

"It fell on my leg," said poor little fat Dody, rubbing his shin; "and it hurts, it does so."

"Who brought the dogs in, little ones?" asked Mr. Vane, gravely.

"They stole in themselves, Mr. Vane," said Dody, with a solemn countenance.

"I'll tell you who broke the plant," said Mr. Vane, looking gravely around the little flutter-

ing group ; “ it was a very troublesome fellow who did the mischief, and his name is—disobedience. Did you forget, children, that it is against the rules to romp about the house with the dogs ? ”

The children flushed up, hung their heads, and looked very sorry. They loved Mr. and Mrs. Vane very much, and were really grieved at what had happened. Not only looked sorry, but Effie and Ida asked Mrs. Vane’s forgiveness for their thoughtless conduct, and promised not to do the like again. Tip and Dixie knew that something was up, and sneaked off, and Hal and Dody crept to their mamma’s side.

“ Well, I hope, my dears, that you will be more careful in future,” said Mrs. Vane. “ I *am* extremely sorry to lose my beautiful plant which I have been so long watching, but if the accident makes you all more thoughtful in future, I shall be satisfied.”

Mrs. Germaine and Mrs. Varney expressed their concern at the ruin of the rare plant, upon whose stems two magnificent flowers were

budding; and told the children to come upstairs into Mrs. Varney's room, where a council of ways and means was forthwith instituted, in reference to the plant.

All were seated around the cheerful fire. Grave and subdued looks were in every countenance except Dody's, which would break into smiles like a full-moon in spite of the serious eyes that met his, which had the effect of only making him look down a little ashamed; but the instant he raised his eyes again his lips would fly back, showing every tooth in his head.

"Children," said Mrs. Germaine, "I am sure that you are sorry for what has happened. It was your carelessness and disobedience together that caused the mischief. Now, what shall you do? You have said that you are sorry, but that is not enough. Something remains to be done."

"What is it, mamma?" inquired Ida.

"Can—eh—we mend the—eh—plant, mamma?" asked Hal.

"I guess I can stick it together with Spauld-

ing's glue. Mr. Vane mended the table with some, and the leg was as strong as ever," said Dody gravely; "but maybe it wouldn't grow." They all laughed.

"What do you think, Effie?" asked Mrs. Germaine.

"Couldn't we buy another plant like it, for Mrs. Vane?" asked Effie, very earnestly.

"That is just it," said Mrs. Germaine. "You must all buy another like it at the city green-house; but you must each one put in so much out of your own pocket-money to pay for it. Does that seem right?"

"Oh, yes, indeed. That's splendid!" cried the children, clapping their hands with delight at having the difficulty so nicely solved. "We'd rather do that than to buy toys and goodies." And they began to get uproarious over the clever scheme, when Mrs. Varney observed: "Children, I think that you have made noise enough for to-day, and if your mamma agrees, I'll bargain with you for a story—Stop, and hear what I have to say. I don't intend to tell the story, but I wish each one of you to

write a nice little story, about any thing you please."

"Yes, indeed, that is a very clever idea," said Mrs. Germaine.

"But we can't. We do not know how," exclaimed the children.

"You all know how to write, except Dody," observed Mrs. Germaine, "and you can but try. Dody must *tell* his little story, and Hal will write it off for him."

"I'll write a fairy tale," said Effie, her eyes sparkling, and her face all aglow.

"I don't think I *can* write a tale, mamma," said Ida, in a despondent tone. "I'll try, though."

"I'll write a splendid one," exclaimed Dody, snapping his fingers.

"I'll try, too," said Hal, rapping his knuckles on his head. "Any thing in—eh—there? If—eh—there be—come out." The children laughed at the thought of Hal's drumming up his ideas in that style.

"The tales or stories, when finished, are to be sealed up and handed to Mrs. Germaine,

and the day after Christmas she or I will read them aloud. Let me see. You have four days ; why, that is almost time enough to write a book in," said Mrs. Varney, encouragingly. The children all agreed to the plan, and paper and pencils being furnished them, all became quiet along the lines.

Their lessons, the "tales," and their Christmas preparations, kept the children busy for a day or two, but not so busy that they could not every now and then find time for a good, wholesome romp—sometimes in their own rooms, but oftener at twilight with Mr. Vane, who, like Gulliver among the Lilliputians, towered up in their midst, immovable, while they hung on to his hands, and pulled at his coat skirts in the vain effort to dislodge him from his position. Suddenly, when they least expected it, he would give way, and off would go his assailants, spinning backwards to the four quarters of the room, and end by finding themselves sitting squarely on the floor.

It was Christmas eve, and the sun was shining without a cloud to dim his brightness. A

high wind had dried the earth after the storm, and the weather was as mild as May. Miss Varney was getting ready to go and see after the old black woman in the glen, who was again sick ; and she told Effie that if she would make haste and get on her wrappings, that she might come along. Mrs. Germaine and Mrs. Varney had gone into the city, and taken Fan with them, to fetch out Mrs. Vane's plant ; but it was to be kept a profound secret from her, for they desired to give her an agreeable surprise after the disagreeable one the children had treated her to. The plan was to place the flower among the other plants on the flower-stand the next morning ; and they almost hurt their sides laughing over all that they imagined she would say and do when she discovered it, which they supposed she would do when she went to water the flowers after breakfast, the time she usually attended to them. Oh, the chuckling, winking, and whispering that there was over this clever plan !

Miss Varney carried a bowl of soup to the old sick woman, and Effie took her an orange

which she had bought for herself. It proved very refreshing to the poor old creature, who was very grateful to Effie for bringing it, which made the child happier than she had felt for days. She did not know it, but she was only feeling how much more blessed it is to give than to receive. Old Aunt Gracey asked Miss Varney to read the "prayers for the sick" to her; and she, fearing that Effie might get tired and fidget, told her that she might go for a little while into the glen.

"At last!" cried the child, as she bounded like a young roe over the mossy rocks. Her heart expanded in the bright and glorious sunshine. She felt the influences of the balmy air in every fibre of her being. She sang snatches of song, she leaped and frisked about, half wild with joy. The rivulet, clear and tiny once more, sang its sweetest lay, and tossed up its bright spray in the sunlight. The mosses and lichens were so green after the two days' rain, that the rocks looked like huge malakites on the hill-sides and in the glen. Numbers of ground-squirrels were sunning themselves, or

frisking up and down the trees and over the rocks. Two robins twittered at each other among the leafless branches. They said that summer was near at hand, and they were looking out for their cousins, the swallows, every day. "What a very short winter we have had, to be sure!" twittered the first.

"This is a very nice place. I think I shall build here. Will you be my wife?" twittered the other.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed a ground-squirrel close beside Effie. "I bespeak your eggs. We have famous good times bird-nesting in the spring."

"You cruel little wretch!" stormed Effie, stamping her foot, "you don't mean to say that you steal the poor little birds' eggs?" Nimble was so frightened that he did not stop to answer, but laid back his ears, lifted his tail, and streaked home in flying leaps. Effie laughed, and wished she could have pinched his tail before he got off. She then walked around, looking in every direction for the governor, but it was a long while before

she found him, and when she did he was so much altered that she scarcely knew him. He was sitting aloft in the hollow of a tree, with a sad and care-worn countenance. His coat was as rough as a motherless colt's, and as the sun shone on him, she perceived that his poor little brown cheeks hung like two loose bags on each side his face. His eyes were faded and hollow. He espied Effie, and a gleam of welcome brightened his face, and he arose and held out his thin, tiny hand.

"I am so glad to see you! I was afraid that we should never meet again," said the governor.

"I could not get out for the rain," replied Effie. "Has the Snow-Angel been back again?"

"Oh, no! no! no!" replied the governor, wringing his thin hands until the joints of his poor little fingers cracked. "I should hope to see things settled if she came."

"Will she never come again?" asked Effie, anxiously.

"I hope for her to come every hour," he

said, passing his hand wearily over his forehead. "The fact is, my young friend, that our affairs grow worse and worse, and the silly squirrels all blame ME. The weather continues so mild, that our enemies, the snakes, the rats, and the field-mice, prey on us—"

"They don't eat you—do they?" exclaimed Effie, with horror.

"No," replied the governor, with an air of desperation, "they do worse than that! They invite themselves into our houses, help themselves to our substance, insult us, and make themselves disagreeable in every way. There's a one-eyed snake and a toad in my house: they get into a fury if one but looks at them. They must have the best of every thing, and they put on the most insufferable airs."

"Why don't you put them out?" asked Effie, stoutly.

"Because we fear their venom, young lady. It is deadly poisonous. They know that we hate them. The snake sings—you never heard such a disagreeable voice in your life—and if we don't fall down and adore her, and tell her

that she sings like a seraph, she lashes herself up into a fury, and glares at us as if she would swallow us whole. As to the toad, he is a fool who thinks himself very smart, and talks and eats from morning until night, and has my whole family busy picking his nuts and grubbing for worms all day for his table. We have a miserable time of it. You see, if it would set in for a regular snow, and we could have hard winter-weather, these wretches and marauders would go to sleep, and be no more trouble to us."

"Is every house plagued in the same way?"

"Every one, more or less. There's but one remedy."

"What is that?" inquired Effie, with great curiosity.

"We'll have to send a messenger to the Snow-King, to make known our case."

"The Snow-King? Who is he?" asked the child, in simple wonder.

"He is the father of Flakana—Flakana, the Snow-Angel."

"And where does *he* live?"

“Did you ever notice a bright star over there,” said the governor, pointing to the north, “that never changes its position? That light, which mortals call a star,” continued the governor, with a slightly contemptuous twist of his head at the ignorance of men, “is nothing more nor less than the lamp that is kept forever burning on the chief watch-tower of the Snow-King’s dominions.”

“Indeed! How strange! Were you ever there?”

“No, but last winter a wild-bird that fell wounded down there by my house, told me that she had been there several times. Her companions were on their way there when she was shot—poor thing!—shot by a man for mere sport.”

“And what did she tell you?” asked Effie, earnestly.

“She said that the sun shines there at midnight, and that the palaces were built of pure crystals, and inhabited by angels, who wear raiment like the rainbow, with jewels on their heads and arms!”

“Oh, how much I should like to go to that beautiful country!” exclaimed Effie, quite enraptured.

“Yes,” continued the crafty old governor, “and she said that the skies there are pink, and that sparkling diamonds as big as your fist are flashing and dancing all over them; and that the people fly over the snowy plains and frozen oceans on sleds drawn by white reindeer, whose feet make a musical sound like bells, as they run. And animals with hair like horses, and dolphins, and walruses, come up out of the sea with baskets of pearls and corals, which they strew along the shore for any one who desires to pick them up.”

“See here, governor!” exclaimed Effie trembling with excitement; “would I do to go to the Snow-King?”

“*You*, young lady! If we could only hope for such an envoy, our troubles would soon be at an end,” replied the governor with well-dissembled surprise, while he whisked his tail with rapture, and bowed his poor wrinkled little face low on his breast.

“But see here, governor, how ever am I to get there?”

“Angel Flakana will conduct you, if you really desire to do a generous act towards a suffering people. But I think I hear the lions coming!” he exclaimed, shivering with terror, as the sharp barking of the two dogs echoed through the glen. “I must bid you farewell, lovely friend. Go up into yonder field and put your ear close down to the earth, and you will hear stranger things than any that I have told you.” The Glen-Holme dogs came springing down over the rocks into the glen, and the governor, with wonderful agility, but panting and trembling, made his way swiftly up the tree, to the very topmost branch, where he sat, indulging in sage reflections on the folly of so many different creatures being placed upon earth. *His* opinion was, that ground-squirrels would have been sufficient for all useful and peaceful purposes; while Effie, full of all she had heard concerning the land of the Snow-King, went springing up the steep hill-side, hanging on to the bushes and wild

vines, until she got to the top, where she found a low stone wall, up which she climbed, and over she went—on her nose, into the field. As she lay there nearly stunned, she heard the strangest sounds about her! She could not tell for the life of her where they came from. It appeared to be a barren field into which she had pitched herself headlong, and she saw nothing about her but rough clods of earth, without the slightest particle of vegetation; but still she heard the strange noises, heard a creaking, wailing, sobbing, praying, and complaining, all together! At length there came a pause in the general hubbub, and a small voice close to her ear said: "It's no use to struggle against fate. We are abandoned by the Snow-Angel, and must perish."

"Who are you, and where are you?" inquired Effie.

"Look to your right, just near your thumb, in the broken earth," said the voice.

Effie looked at the spot indicated, but saw nothing except a grain of wheat with a little yellow sprout, like a tail, which wagged to and fro.

"Is it you?" asked Effie, touching the grain with her finger.

"It's nobody else!" answered the wheat; "a poor used-up, struggling individual, just caved in—or rather out," it added.

"What in the world is the matter?" asked Effie, laughing heartily.

"I fear that your heart is not in the right place, child, or you would not deride the woes of a whole nation," said the wheat, sharply.

"Gracious only knows what you mean," said Effie; "but I'd be willing to cry my eyes out if that would help my country."

"*Your* country!" exclaimed the wheat in a tone of bitter contempt. "Without *us* what would *your* country be? WE are king!"

"Are you?" said Effie, meekly; while she thought, "a pretty king you are, stuck down there in the mud!"

"Yes, we are King, because we are Bread. Bread is King, is it not?"

"I don't understand politics, but I expect you are right. I only know that I would rather

have a jolly slice of bread and butter when I am hungry than plum-cake."

"There's some sense in that," replied the wheat, more gently. "Are you the maiden whom the governor of the ground-squirrels promised to send?"

"Yes, and he promised me that you would tell me strange things. The poor old governor is in bad spirits."

"*All for the want of snow,*" sighed the wheat. "Our armies are not prepared to resist the sharp lances of King Frost, who is our great enemy. We have not had a chance to form our spears, and we are slain and wounded by thousands and tens of thousands. Besides which, our enemy sends us earthquakes every day. When the legions of frost disappear the earthquakes commence, our cells are destroyed and we are thrown out lifeless among the ruins."

"Dear me! how very sad!" said Effie, quite touched.

"If the Snow-Angels would only come—the beautiful, soft, gentle Snow-Angels!" sighed the wheat.

“How can they help you?”

“They could save us. You see, little maiden, when the Snow-Angels come in millions, and millions, and millions, and camp over our country, each one brings a crystal pitcher with him, containing a cordial which they distribute in small rations to our people, to whom they also give white fleecy blankets; none of your shoddy stuff—but a warm, good article, which not only keeps us warm, but is also a defence against our enemies. Now, without this cordial and the blankets, we nearly all perish, and the few who are left are gobbled up by the marauders of General Worm and Colonel Rust. I’d as lief be a tare at once. It is very hard for a person of *my* ancient family to be so reduced. Tares seem to thrive,” said the wheat in a voice of utter disgust.

“Is not all wheat alike?” asked Effie, innocently.

But she had raised a storm! The wheat turned heels over head, and sat wagging its tail furiously.

“Alike, indeed! You must be nobody your-

self to imagine such a thing! But I'll excuse you on account of your ignorance. Child, my ancestors came of the first families of Egypt; and when the great Sesostris died, three or four of the chiefs of my race were chosen to guard his body in the pyramids by the Nile. They watched his dead body faithfully for three thousand years, then suddenly a monster—called an Englishman—came and stole it, and after rifling it of all its treasures, handed my progenitors to his gardener, who buried them in the earth. These sprang up and bore seed, the grandest, stateliest wheat that was ever seen, and people sent from all parts of the world for it; and that's how I am here."

"I am very sorry for you. Perhaps—but what are those funny little things that I see down there in that hole?" asked Effie, leaning over.

"Nothing but two tomtits and a butterfly that I tried to keep life in; but after doing my best, they died, poor little beggars! But what were you going to say?"

"Oh—I was going to say that perhaps I

might go soon to the Snow-King, to ask him to send the Snow-Angels," said Effie.

"Accept my homage," said the wheat, bowing; "it will be a great act to save a nation."

"I must go now," said Effie. "My sister is waiting for me. Shall I cover you up?"

"Oh, no. It is no use. But, on second thoughts, you may." And Effie gently spread the mould over the unfortunate wheat, crumbling the hard lumps between her dimpled hands, and began to pat it down for better security against the frost that night, when she heard a smothered screaming, and cries of "Don't, don't, you cruel wretch! You'll smother me! Begone, and leave me!"

Frightened half out of her wits, Effie jumped up and ran as fast as she could go, scrambled over the wall without accident, and quickly reached the house of the old woman in the glen, just as her sister finished reading the Litany for her.

CHAPTER V.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

JUST a little while after tea that evening, the man who had been spoken to, to cut the Christmas-trees, made his appearance with them, thereby causing intense excitement among the children, who seemed as if they would never grow tired of admiring them. They firmly believed that there was nothing half so beautiful, of the kind, to be found in the forests of the whole earth, and revelled in "great expectations," and delighted in the mystery that invested the arrangements for the next day. They plotted among themselves to go to bed early that night, so as to be out of the way, that people might have time and opportunity to decorate the trees without hurry. Their anticipations were gorgeous, and they all declared that they wouldn't look at any of the pretty

things they expected, if they were spread out before them! No, indeed! "they would shut their eyes tight up. *They* didn't want even to hear a word about what they were going to get." Effie had the curtains, which hung like a tent over her mamma's bed, drawn close together and pinned, so that there was not even a crevice through which she could peep, if tempted to do so; then she curled herself up like a dormouse under the blankets, just leaving the tip of her nose out, like a seal in the water, for breath. She knew that her mamma and sister would fix up her tree beautifully, and she thought how splendid it would look in the bright gas-light. I do not know whether it was that Effie was more tired out than usual, or whether it was because the light was entirely excluded from her eyes by the closing of the bed-curtains, but it is very certain that in a short time she was sound asleep.

The little Germaines went giggling to bed, and got their nurse to hang a counterpane before their Christmas-tree, for fear they might wake up and see it in the night; then, after

considerable whispering with each other, and smothered laughter under the quilt, they became quiet, and were feeling sleepy, when Hal and Dody, unknown to each other, peeped out, and catching a glimpse of something very bright and glittering through a hole in the counterpane, they bobbed their heads under at the same moment. Crash came their foreheads together, with such a bump that they saw stars, and thought the day of judgment was come! Then there was a suppressed roar, a few sniffs and sobs, which grew fainter and fainter, and at last all became quiet.

Effie awoke once during the night, and heard men's voices talking in a low tone just under her mamma's window; then she heard heavy footsteps ascend to the hall-door; then some one give a great pull at the bell. It was Christmas, she was sure! But perhaps it might be robbers! Oh, dear, what a frightful idea! and she drew up close to her mamma, trembling and chilled with terror; but she would not awaken her, because she knew that it always made her ill to lose her night's rest: so

she lay there, almost breathless, listening to every sound. Doors opened and shut, people seemed to be going up and down stairs, and something heavy appeared to be put down on the parlor floor. Presently she heard Mr. Vane laugh, then Mrs. Vane called "Maumy" softly, and Effie felt no longer frightened, knowing that if Mr. and Mrs. Vane and Maumy were up and about, there could be no danger.

Near morning! Five o'clock, the old time-piece said. The heavens were purple in their deep stillness, and the stars, glittering and tremulous, seemed to be rejoicing together. A hoar-frost sparkled over the earth, and powdered the trees and shrubs with its tiny gems. All was silent except the wind, which came piping shrilly around the gables of Glen-Holme, and it was bitterly cold. Did it look like this on that night long, long ago, when the weary, drowsy shepherds on the hills of Galilee were startled into strange wonder by the far-off song of the angels of God—the jubilant angels, who were descending swiftly, clothed in

shining white, and full of joy at the message they brought from heaven, of "Peace on earth and good-will to men?" And when the simple shepherds, almost dead with terror at the glory of the heavenly visitors, fell on their faces, the angels, full of love and compassion, sang: "Be not afraid. We bring you glad tidings of great joy. The Messiah is born. Go ye into Bethlehem and adore the Divine Babe, whom ye will find in a manger, wrapped in swaddling bands, and watched by his Virgin Mother. A bright star shines over the spot. Come, let us go and adore him." It must have been just such a clear and tranquil night as this when that wonderful mystery occurred, the glorious mystery of the birth of Christ the Lord. Remember it, little ones, in your Christmas joys. Think how He came, in the humble guise of a child born in poverty, for your salvation. You are not too young to think of these things, and to know how He loves children who offer the first-fruits of their lives at his crib, with the shepherds and the magi; and who, amidst their own prosperity and happiness, do not for-

get the children of poverty and want. Whenever you see a poor little ragged child, think of the CHILD JESUS, who was born in a stable, poor and outcast ; and believe me, little ones, that whatever you do unto that one, whether much or less, you do unto the Christ Child. He has said that "whatsoever ye do unto the least of these, ye do unto me." Let the thought of Jesus mingle with your Christmas joys ; it will not cloud them ; it will not lessen your cheer, but only sanctify and brighten the hours still more as they glide past.

We have said that it was bitterly cold that night, or rather that morning. Even the dogs sought shelter, and the sentries in a camp near by had to walk briskly to keep their toes and ears from freezing. But within, at Glen-Holme, there was light and warmth. In Mrs. Germaine's room a magnificently decorated tree, loaded with beautiful things, flashed and glittered in the red fire-light.

In Mrs. Varney's apartment stood another, gleaming and glittering with its precious freight of golden balls, bonbons, sugar butterflies with

gilded wings, and white birds half hidden between the dark green leaves. Above all shone a large star, and upon the table on which the tree stood were arranged the toys, books, and other gifts.

General Germaine and his brave young sons had arrived in a train that passed through Winona a little after midnight. Effie's brother had also come. This, then, was the bustle that the child had heard and could not account for.

The morning arose bright and glorious. Mr and Mrs. Vane, Mrs. Germaine, and Miss Varney were up. Suddenly there arose on the morning stillness the sound of music. It sounded like an organ. Then swelled out loud, sweet voices, singing, "Come, let us adore Him," led by a tenor inexpressibly clear and fine. Mrs. Varney lifted her head from her pillow, and, leaning on her elbow, listened with deep emotion to that concert in honor of the birth of Christ. But the organ was a mystery. There was nothing of the sort about the house. Onward and upward pealed the hymn.

"Oh, mamma, what is that? It sounds like

the angels who sang to the shepherds," exclaimed Effie, who had just awakened.

"It does, indeed, darling. Rise quickly and dress. This is a day of great joy—don't you remember?"

"Oh yes, mamma; a happy Christmas to you, and Christmas gift!" exclaimed Effie, springing up. In another moment, her bare feet twinkling over the carpet, she was beside her Christmas-tree. The joyful, beautiful sight, and the music together, were too much for her, and she fell to dancing round and round—an innocent dance, which only expressed by harmonious action the happiness and gratitude of her impulsive little heart. There stood her doll, in lace and silken attire of red, white, and blue. There was a kitchen, and beside the stove, leaning back in her chair quite at ease, a negro servant. Another one stood at the dresser, with biscuit-board and rolling-pin before her. And then there was a real bedstead, with a real feather-bed and pillows, real blankets, sheets, a chintz spread, and ruffled pillow-cases. The two things she had most wished

for! A set of mahogany furniture, and a parlor—books, tea-set, box of furniture, china dolls, and many other things.

“Oh, mamma, how good the Christ Child has been to me! I must thank Him right off,” and Effie ran and knelt down in the oratory, and said her prayers, offering her heart with simple faith to the Divine Child of Bethlehem. From the parlor below still uprose the hymn, the floating music, the soaring voices, and to the child it all seemed like heaven. Presently a door across the hall opened, and shouts of childish glee and the sounds of dancing pattering feet were added to the chorus. Mrs. Varney’s door was open, and she looked out, and, amidst the strong lights of fire and the tapers on the Christmas-tree in Mrs. Germaine’s room, she saw three little figures in white night-gowns, wild with delight, circling round and round the festal tree, whose boughs were laden with more beautiful fruit than they had ever read of, even in fairy tales—uttering exclamations of wonder and delight, singing snatches of songs and hymns, and resisting stoutly all

attempts of their nurse to dress them,—resisted until, during a slight pause in their tumult, they heard the music and the voices ; then it was who should get dressed first ! Katy kindly aided each one in completing his simple toilet, and down they started just as Effie left her door. “ Christmas gift ! Christmas gift ! ” was shouted from one to the other. Then they all swept like a whirlwind into the parlor—the parlor lighted up and dressed with evergreens, and where on one side, amidst the radiance of wax candles, a group surrounded a “ melodeon,” at which sat General Germaine, playing the accompaniment and leading the sacred hymn. Mrs. Germaine leaned on her brave husband’s shoulder, overflowing with quiet happiness, which found vent in notes of praise to God, who had brought him safely out of the fiery perils of war ; not only him, but her two young and gallant sons also, who, in their uniforms of blue and gold, stood with Effie’s brother and sister near her. Mr. and Mrs. Vane, whose faces wore a sweet and solemn expression, completed the group, and added

their full and musical voices to swell the Christmas hymn. The last notes were dying away when the children rushed in. Claspings arms, warm kisses, and loving words, greeted the noisy little revellers, who, as insatiate as leeches, shouted lustily, "Christmas gift! Christmas gift! Christmas gift!" until the gray African parrot, who had been sitting in his ring dumb with amazement at the music, shouted at the top of his lungs: "Shut up! Willie's mad! Shut up! Hoo-oo-e-oo-ee-e!" and the two dogs, who had been sitting in profound cogitation on the rug, as much mystified as the parrot by the strange, sweet music, thought *their* time had now come. They could understand the uproar that now burst around them, sweeter sounds to them by far than harps or dulcimer; and up they sprang, Tip seizing Dody by his jacket, and Dixie Effie by her skirt, pulling and tugging, until a general *mêlée* ensued, which ended in a promiscuous tumbling down of children and dogs. It was against the law, but they had been inveigled into it so suddenly that there was no time for

thought. Mr. Vane expelled Tip and Dixie without ceremony, and, calling the children around them, asked them "if they should not like to sing the Christmas Carol which they had been practising some time?" No need for words—assent was in every countenance. General Germaine had the music before him, and when Mr. Vane raised his clear full voice, and began the words—

"Carol, carol, Christians,
Carol joyfully!
Carol for the coming
Of Christ's nativity,"

the children sang with all their heart and soul; their eyes brightening, their cheeks glowing, and the happy smiles of childhood dimpling their innocent faces. The general played the accompaniment with rich and solemn emphasis, and every eye was moistened as the clear treble of the childish voices rang out loud and sweet, hymning the sacred carol in honor of "Christ's nativity!" Those tender mothers there present could but think of that sinless Mother who watched beside her divine

Babe in the stable at Bethlehem, "through whose heart a sword was to pass," and they wondered how the future, which now appeared so dark with wars and commotions, would be for them; and their hearts trembled, as they commended their loved ones, great as well as small, to the care of Him who had once assumed the guise of a little child for their salvation.

Each one had a gift for the servants, who were just as happy as the children. As to Maumy, she was quite beside herself, over the dolls, toys, and picture-books; and Fan, who had also received several nice gifts, was serenely happy, her clean yellow face beaming like the newly risen moon. After breakfast, Mrs. Vane wondered why the children did not go up to their trees and toys. She had given Effie a beautiful set of mahogany parlor furniture for her doll, and Ida a silver "sewing-bird;" but still they lingered so demure, and yet apparently so full of some mystery, that she could not account for it. Presently she went towards the flower-stand to water her flowers: the children

fluttered, and nudged each other, their eyes following her to the window, full of expectation.

"Why, where in the world did this come from?" suddenly exclaimed Mrs. Vane in a tone of great surprise, as her eyes fell on a magnificent specimen of the plant which had been broken the week before by the children—in full flower, and rich with fragrance.

"*We* got it, Mrs. Vane!" shouted Dody, turning heels over head in the exuberance of his delight.

"All of us!" added Hal, dancing.

"Why, you dear little ones!" cried Mrs. Vane, "I didn't dream of so pleasant a surprise as this. I thought all the morning that I perceived a strange fragrance in the room. It is perfectly splendid! Come and kiss me!" Up, then, they all trooped to be kissed, glowing and smiling with satisfaction at the success of their well-planned surprise. Before church-time came they had each one selected, from among their treasures, a portion for old Aunt Gracey and the poor soldier's orphans; not

broken or defaced things, but some of the prettiest and nicest. I am sure I saw some gold and silver balls, sugar-kisses, oranges, figs, toys, and cakes in the basket, into which they were packing them. After which, cloaked and wrapped snugly in furs, the young troop sallied forth with their elders, to their respective places of worship. Then all was once more "quiet along the lines." Mrs. Varney and her son, whom she had not seen for some months, had much quiet and sad conversation together; the upshot of which was, that the family were to return to Washington in the spring, where Mrs. Varney's second daughter, Mary—who was married to an officer of the army, and lived at West Point with her husband and little daughter—expected to meet them.

A noble dinner awaited the church-goers upon their return. First, mock-turtle soup. A great turkey, garnished with tufts of parsley, and flowers cunningly chiselled out of beet-roots, carrots, and slices of turnips—which, placed among the green parsley-leaves, really looked like white and red roses and mari-

golds! There was a baked ham; a pan of boiled fowls, fried oysters, cranberry sauce, vegetables, pickles, pies of minced meat, plum-pudding, calves' feet jelly, fresh peaches and cream, preserved strawberries and cream, blanc-mange, tarts—which altogether formed several courses. It was as good as a play to see Maumy's look of satisfied pride, as she moved with dignity around the table, "king behind the throne" in all that appertained to the arrangements of the various courses. Wishing each one to enjoy and appreciate every delicacy set before them, she watched vigilantly so that none should overeat himself at any particular course; and when the banquet was over, and she had drank in to her entire satisfaction all the compliments, verbal and practical, which were bestowed upon it, she felt as if a great event had been achieved, and her small black eyes glistened under her turban of orange and crimson bandanna, like two diamonds set in jet.

In the afternoon there were great preparations making to attend Mr. Vane's Sunday-

school festival, which was to be held in the large saloon of the Town Hall, in Winona. The carriage was to go and come twice for the inmates of Glen-Holme. The servants were to walk over : but as to that, "Old Sledge" knew there was something in the wind, and stuck up his ears, shook his mane, and neighed at such rate, that Mr. Vane said he "looked as if he wanted to carry all the neighborhood to the festival." Dody said, "maybe he was wishing us all a happy Christmas." And so he was, for Effie heard him, as plain as plain can be ; and the fun of it was, he thought that they all understood him. But she kept her secret gravely, and patted "Old Sledge" on his haunches, which made him neigh right out with delight.

An immense Christmas-tree, beautifully lit up with tapers, stood on a long table at the upper end of the saloon. From its boughs hung the gay and pretty prizes that were to be awarded to each one of the Sunday school pupils who had good-conduct and merit-tickets to show. Piles of books, some in scarlet and some in blue bindings, with beautiful de-

vices in gold on the backs and gilt-edged leaves, were temptingly displayed under the tree. Beyond these stood baskets full of delicious cakes, oranges, apples, almonds, and raisins, candies and bonbons, provided by the ladies of the congregation. Mr. Vane made the children a short address, which very plainly expressed the deep interest that he felt in them, spiritually and temporally; after which, they all sang with him in fine style the

CHRISTMAS CAROL.

I.

Carol, carol, Christians,
Carol joyfully!
Carol for the coming
Of Christ's nativity;
And pray a gladsome Christmas
For all good Christian men.
Carol, carol, Christians!
For Christmas comes again.

CHORUS.—Carol, carol, Christians, etc.

II.

Go ye to the forest,
Where the myrtles grow,

Where the pine and laurel
Bend beneath the snow ;
Gather them for Jesus,
Wreathe them for his shrine,
Make his temple glorious
With the box and pine.

CHORUS.

III.

Wreathe your Christmas garland,
Where to Christ we pray ;
It shall smell like Carmel
On our festal day ;
Libanus and Sharon
Shall not fairer be
Than our sacred Altar
On Christ's nativity.

CHORUS.

IV.

Carol, carol, Christians !
Like the magi now,
Ye must lade your caskets
With a solemn vow ;
Ye must have sweet incense,
Myrrh and finest gold,
At our Christmas Altar
Humbly to unfold.

CHORUS.

V.

Blow, blow up the trumpet
For our joyful feast !
Gird thine armor, Christian,
Put on thy surplice, priest !
Go ye to the Altar,
Pray with fervor, pray
For JESUS' second coming
And the Latter Day.

CHORUS.

VI.

Give us grace, O Saviour,
To put off in might
Deeds and dreams of darkness
For the robes of light !
And to live as lowly
As Thyself with men ;
So to rise in glory
When thou com'st again.

CHORUS.—Carol, carol, Christians,

Carol joyfully !

Carol for the coming

Of Christ's nativity. Carol, carol.

Those were the words of the carol. Not only did Mr. Vane and the children sing, but all who

were present joined in the chorus with such hearty good-will, that the walls of the spacious saloon fairly trembled with the notes of the solemn and joyful lay. After the sounds had died away, and the eyes that had filled and brimmed over with tears of unspeakable emotion were dried, Mr. and Mrs. Vane distributed premiums to the expectant candidates, and gifts and refreshments to all the little ones present. Every one was gay with a blithesome and innocent gladness; each countenance was lit up in the radiance outflowing from the crib of the Holy Child Jesus, in whose honor the sad and careworn of the earth, weary and sighing beneath the burden of life, turn willingly aside to make children happy, blessing in their hearts the holy festival, which carries them back to the sinless hours of their own youth, and to faces and smiles faded and buried long ago.

Suddenly the saloon was darkened. Some felt frightened, some laughed, others stumbled and fell, as they tried to scramble back to their seats; then a clapping of hands was heard in one corner, and a shout of "Magic Lantern!

Magic Lantern!" arose. That was it! Mr. Vane's great Magic Lantern, for which he had purchased some new and beautiful transparencies for the occasion, was about to be exhibited. Every thing was soon arranged; the powerful lamp was lighted, and darting its rays through the lens, formed a large white disk on the wall, as round as a cheese. "Oh! oh! oh my! How funny! How bright! How strange!" were the expressions buzzed around on every side, as each one's eyes, widely opened, watched for fresh wonders. They did not wait long.

"I will show you," said Mr. Vane, "the Nativity first; the divine Child on the bosom of his Virgin Mother, St. Joseph standing near the manger, the oxen, the shepherds with the firstlings of their flocks, the Magi with their precious gifts, all offering adoration to the Son of God." There it all was sure enough, richly delineated on the wall in bright and glowing colors, like a splendid fresco painting, while the various personages of the sacred tableau were nearly the size of life. Amidst gold-

tinted clouds hanging above the Holy Family were seen hovering the angels who had brought the tidings of peace and good-will from heaven to earth, while in the distance arose the mountains of Judea and the blue hills of Moab! The children had never in all their lives seen any thing which they thought half so beautiful, and they *whispered* their delight with a sort of intuitive reverence to their parents and to each other. Only one irrepressible little voice burst out with: "Don't I wish *I* had been there!" No one knew who it was, and it seemed so natural an expression of the feelings of all present, that it was not even an interruption. But the scene was fading! The beautiful tableau had vanished.

"Now," said Mr. Vane, "I will show you the Israelites going out of Egypt, and the drowning of the hosts of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. You all know the story." In an instant the sandy plains of Egypt were spread out to view. There were the distant Pyramids, the mysterious Nile, and the Obelisks and Monoliths that ornamented the roadsides which led from

the cities into the desert; the roads crowded with an endless multitude of men, young and old, women and children—camels and mules, loaded with treasures and household goods, and the sick and infirm—and oxen, sheep, and horses—all marching with exultant steps out of the land of their captivity and oppression towards the Red Sea. But little can be said as to the artistic execution of the scene, for the high-peaked hats, odd-looking dresses, and fierce strutting of the men, who, with a broad grin on their countenances, which were turned towards the audience, seemed to challenge admiration, made the children laugh right out; while the women, arrayed in garments of red, green, and yellow, with *high-heeled* shoes on, looked as unconcerned as if they were going to a fair, instead of being pursued by the fierce Egyptians, with a fair prospect of being overtaken by them and driven back into captivity, or driven into the great sea before them and drowned. Moses in pink garments, and Aaron in blue, led them all to the verge of the waves, which suddenly, by some ingenious mechan-

ism of the lantern, opened right and left, and the great multitude passed over to the other side dry-shod. Then appeared the hosts of Pharaoh in pursuit, horsemen, chariots, archers, and foot-soldiers in battle array. "*Here comes old Pharaoh with his smartness!*" exclaimed Ida Germaine, who was so deeply engrossed by the scene that she forgot herself and where she was. There arose a great shout of laughter, for there was no sympathy felt for Pharaoh, and they all knew what he caught by his smartness. On marched the Egyptian hosts, with gleaming spears, ivory chariots, and arrows of burnished steel, their proud banners waving in the breeze; down into the dry bed of the sea they trooped, when suddenly down swept the unchained billows, drowning them in a great flood; while the Israelites, encamped safely on the other side, sang praises to God for their deliverance, with the sound of harp and timbrel; and in the distance appeared the pillar of fire that was to guide them, "a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night." Then all vanished amidst a storm of ap-

plause—as the papers say—and a beautiful passion-flower stood out on the wall, which looked as if it had just been gathered from some Floridian vine, and tossed there. While all were gazing admiringly on it, it began to expand, and suddenly from its centre uprose the head and shoulders of a woman, who appeared to be in a violent passion; her clenched fists, scowling eyes, and angry brow showing very plainly that “somebody was hurt,” or soon would be. A burst of merriment saluted the virago, and the children declared they did not want such flowers as that to be growing around; then, as if satisfied with the display she had made, or ashamed of herself, she plunged out of sight and the flower faded. Presto! A fashionable lady appears without hoops, looking like a broomstick, and altogether disconsolate, when lo! up flew her head, and *out* flew her skirts as large as life. Shouts of laughter and clapping of little hands saluted her, and gravely curtseying, she glided out of sight. When the merriment subsided, all eyes were once more fixed expectantly on the luminous

disk, which was suddenly shadowed over by a night-scene on the ocean! The waves rolled high. Stars glittered here and there, and the moon was half hidden by rugged clouds. Afar off gleamed the light-house, "like a star on the breast of the ocean." Then appeared a ship at anchor, red lights shining from her port-holes and cabin windows, as she rose and fell with the billows. *That* was a sight to see, and a storm of applause arose loud and long enough to have sent the ship scudding off under bare poles to the northwest passage, if she had not been so fast anchored. After the first tableau—the Nativity—the Ship at Anchor was the favorite, even over "Joseph and his Brethren;" "Moses in the Bulrushes;" "the Good Samaritan," and "Noah going into the Ark." I should be glad to record a more proper appreciation on the part of the children of all the *sacred* representations they saw, and should have been exceedingly happy if they had only uttered a few moral sentiments; but they were children as *they are*, and not as they *ought to be*, so they boldly announced before Mr. Vane

himself, that, after the "Nativity," they liked the ship best of all; and I very much fear that there were some little reprobates there, who, if they had been pushed to the wall, would not even have excepted the Nativity.

At length the festival was over, and the minister was more than rewarded by the sweet assurance that he had made many little hearts happy. Oh, it is no little thing, believe me, to make children happy—happy in the right way; for, "Inasmuch," saith the God-man, "as ye do it to the least of these my little ones, ye do it unto ME." "Whosoever offends one of these little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hung about his neck, and he were drowned in the depths of the sea."

* * * "And Jesus called a little child to him and blessed him."

CHAPTER VI.

THE MENAGERIE.—EVENING ENTERTAINMENTS.

EFFIE was very tired by the time she got home from Mr. Vane's festival, and looked so drooping that her mamma asked her if she felt sick.

"No, I am not sick, mamma. I only feel strangely in my head. Somehow, I seem to be floating," answered Effie, as she put her arms about her mother, and laid her head upon her bosom. Her cheeks were brilliantly flushed, her eyes sparkled, but her fingers were cold and her breathing hurried.

"It is the day's excitement, dear mamma—nothing else," said Miss Varney, kneeling down beside Effie. "Come, little woman, you are very tired I know, let us go up together to bed."

"After I look at Hal's menagerie, sister Clare, I will. It is so curious! They all look like real animals, and can shake their heads. I had not time to get a good look at them all to-day. I am rested now," said the child, lifting up her face, now bright with its old earnest, wild expression.

"I believe you were only a wee bit worn out with fatigue, after all," said Miss Varney, kissing her, with a look of relief.

"I shall consult Dr. Dennis to-morrow about the child. She has some fever every night of her life," observed Mrs. Varney in an undertone.

"I would do so, mamma, by all means," she replied.

"Here, here is my *menagerie*, Effie," said amiable Hal Germaine, fetching the box which contained the *menagerie* from a table at the other end of the room; "take it up-stairs with you, then you can see it early in the morning."

"That is very kind of you, Hal," said Effie, with delight sparkling in her eyes; "I will take the best care of your animals."

"Hal is always doing something kind, or saying something pleasant," said Mrs. Varney, laying her hand affectionately on the little fellow's flaxen head, while he blushed like a girl.

I say "like a girl," because it is a common expression; but I am sorry to declare my belief that it is not by any means a common occurrence now-a-days for girls to blush. Their faces redden with anger sometimes, and gratified vanity, or wounded pride; but as for a real, modest blush!—well, it is a very beautiful thing, to say the least of it.

Undressed, with a little dressing-gown thrown on over her nightgown, Effie felt better, and she sat down upon the rug before the fire to unpack the *menagerie*. In a few minutes, elephants, giraffes, lions, tigers, hyenas, and polar bears stood nodding their heads before her, their yellow eyes glistening in the firelight, their white fangs shining, and their red tongues glowing—handsome, fierce-looking, savage beasts, which seemed ready to devour one. She had read about them all in natural history,

and had once accompanied her brother to a real *menagerie*, where she had seen all the beasts living, and heard them roaring, and these were the exact miniatures of them.

“Oh, but you do look ferocious, Mr. Lion, with your mane ruffled up, your head thrown back, and your mouth wide open, crouched for a spring! Oh, you are a sneak, you tiger, creeping along looking sideways, and licking your chops, with that wicked expression of ire in your face!” said Effie, as she looked steadily at the animals which she had grouped about her, until her head began to float again. Then she moved them, and arranged them all underneath the centre-table, so that she might see them as soon as she got up the next morning. She had forgotten all about the “governor’s” promised visit to inspect the Christmas-tree, and made her preparations for rest, said her prayers, kissed her sister, jumped into bed, and had scarcely snuggled herself down upon her pillow before she was asleep. But a little past midnight she suddenly awoke from a dream, in which she thought she was floating high up in

the air on the back of a white swan. "I wish I *could* go sailing up in the air," said the child. "I would go straight to the Snow-King." She raised herself up and looked towards the eastern window. The curtains were drawn aside, and the moonlight streamed through. She could see the distant hills, and the tree-tops in the glen waving gently to and fro. An irresistible desire seized her to get up and run to the window to look out at the moon and stars, which she did; but she felt so chilled, for it was bitterly cold, that she flew back to the fire and crouched on the rug, her knees drawn up to her chin, and her hands outspread before the grate. After getting thoroughly warmed, she looked up and saw her Christmas-tree flooded with moonlight, and thought how very beautiful it was. Then she began to think of "the ship at anchor," and imagined it must be very nice to be rocked up and down on the waves, and wondered if, when her mamma and all of them went to Italy, they would go in a ship like Mr. Vane's. In the midst of her cogitations something cold touched her toe, and upon look-

ing down, after a slight start, who should she see but the "governor!"

"How do you do, governor? Excuse me for not having seen you before. I am so glad that you have come to see my Christmas tree!"

"I have been here some time, little lady, and have examined every part of that most magnificent tree. It is splendid! It must have cost millions upon millions! So much gold! So many precious stones! So many rare and costly things!" exclaimed the governor, with rapture. The sly old cove had not only been *up* the tree, but had helped himself to tit-bits off the most costly bonbons upon it. For he was a public functionary, and knew how to make the most of his advantages.

"I am glad that you admire my tree, governor. It *is* very beautiful, and it has made my Christmas very happy," replied Effie, as she arose from the rug and went to the tree, from which she took down several silk bags of the tiniest dimensions, which were stuffed with delicious French seed confectionery, and

presented them to the governor. "Here," she continued, "is something nice for your wife and children. I made those cunning little sacks myself, and everybody was dying with curiosity to know what, or whom, they were for. I never forget old friends, governor. Here, take them ; and when you go, you can just take the strings between your teeth and haul them along ; they are not heavy, you know."

"Exactly. Nothing could be better contrived. Accept my thanks, generous princess. I wish you many returns of this festive day ! Now, I must say adieu ! I have not another moment to spare. The Snow-Angel—"

"The Snow-Angel !" exclaimed Effie, trembling with delight.

"The Snow-Angel has been here to-night—in this apartment—but alas ! gracious lady, you were sound asleep," said the governor, with slow emphasis.

"Oh, dear ! oh, dear !" said the child, wringing her hands ; "shall I never see her again ? Oh, governor, I am so sorry that I am such a sleepy-head. I would give every thing I

have in the world to see the Snow-Angel once more."

"She left her love for you," continued the governor, "and says that she will come again very soon, to take you to the court of her father, if you still wish to go;" and then the sly old diplomatist coughed.

"I guess I *do* want to go!" said Effie, earnestly, as she dashed the tears from her eyelashes. "Tell Angel Flakana so, whenever you see her again. But see, governor, your bonbons are rolling over the floor. You will lose them all, I fear."

The governor whisked himself around, and began to chase the bonbons about as they rolled here and there; when all at once he found himself confronted with the animals of the *menagerie*, who glared savagely in his face, appearing to threaten him with instant death. With a wild scream of alarm, he made but three flying leaps, and disappeared. Effie saw it all, and laughed until her sides ached; then she went to bed again, but lay awake a long time, laughing to herself at the silly old "gov-

ernor's fright." She awoke the next morning after a late nap, feeling refreshed, and was ready for a regular holiday of Christmas games and plays. Hal's beasts did not look quite so ferocious by daylight, because one could see that their tongues were made of red cloth, and that their heads were hitched into their necks with a sort of a spring, which caused them to turn them from side to side whenever they were moved or touched; and their eyes, which glared so dreadfully by lamp-light, were only yellow paint, glazed with isinglass, but still they were wonderfully like the animals they represented, except in size; and Effie packed them away carefully in the box where they belonged, laughing now and then to herself at the great scare they had given the "governor," and at his undignified exit.

There was a great deal of visiting among the dolls that day; putting together of dissected maps; playing keeping house, and making believe to cook in the kitchen; making up the doll's bed, arranging the new furni-

ture, laughing over the toy picture-books and reading beautiful stories. Then General Germaine told them about the battle of Fredericksburg; but when he saw how it was saddening the youthful party, he opened the melodeon and played and sang the "Star-spangled Banner" in magnificent style; and some comic songs which made them all uproarious with glee. Then they had a dance, *sans ceremonie*.

After tea Mrs. Germaine proposed that the children should hand in the tales they had written, to be read aloud. They tried to beg off, and expostulated, and declared they were ashamed to have their silly little stories read out before Mr. Vane and the general; but Mrs. Germaine and Mrs. Varney were inexorable. So they ran up stairs and came back, each one, except Ida, with a folded and sealed paper in their hands, which they laid, with shy looks, and any amount of giggling, in Mrs. Germaine's lap. She was to read their productions aloud. Maumy got a hint from Fan as to what was going on, and after a whispered consultation with Mrs. Vane, she and Fan

got permission to form part of the audience. When every thing became quite silent, Mrs. Germaine opened the envelopes, and, after glancing over their contents, began with Dody's story,—Dody, who ran and hid behind the large chair, in which the general sat, and whose round face could be discerned now and then rising over the back of it, like a full red moon, then suddenly disappearing, as if under an eclipse.

“One morning,” narrated Dody, “when we were down at Fort —— in Texas, we were eating breakfast, and all at once we heard such a strange sort of a noise, that everybody jumped up from the table, and ran out on the verandah, to see what was the matter; and behold you, what should it be but old Pomp, our dog, with his head in a pitcher, running round and round, howling and whining. The foolish old fellow had gone and rammed his head down into the pitcher to get at something to eat that he smelt at the bottom, and then he couldn't get it out again; and it was very funny to see him fastened up in that way,

making a worse noise than the Camanches." There arose a great laugh at Dody's story, which Hal had written down for him precisely as he had told it. The general and Mrs. Germaine remembered the incident perfectly, and said that Pomp always looked ashamed after that whenever he saw a pitcher. Then Mrs. Germaine proceeded to read

HAL'S STORY.

Once, when we were at Fort Laramie, we boys got it into our heads that, some of those days, we might be soldiers; so we thought we'd begin to get ready for it, and we fixed up a tent out of two old blankets that Corporal Gunn gave us, at a place away down amongst some trees that we called our camp. We had guns, and swords, and drums, trumpets and cartridge-boxes, caps and feathers, that we had got from Frank and Willie for Christmas gifts; and one of the soldiers gave us some straw to sleep upon. After supper—we used to have supper very early down there—we stole off to our camp, to have dress-parade. I

forgot to tell you that we were six boys in all. The other boys were the sons of officers who lived in the garrison. After dress-parade we called the muster-roll, beat tattoo, and by and by beat taps, and all turned into bed and went to sleep, sure enough, for I tell you we were very tired with our hard day's work. Mamma and papa did not know where we were, or any thing about it, and were very much frightened; and papa sent the orderlies out to hunt us up, and some of the men went outside the garrison to see if we had strayed off. They thought the Indians, who were very unfriendly around that country, had caught us, and it was twelve o'clock that night before they found out where we were; and I tell you we were scared when we waked up and saw papa and the soldiers standing all around us, with light-wood torches."

"I was for letting them sleep it out, when I found they were safe," said General Germaine, laughing heartily, "but I knew their mother was half distracted about them. I assure you the young rascals thought it very disgraceful to

be hauled up out of camp in that unceremonious fashion, and put into bed with nightgowns on. As to Dody, he very indignantly asked me 'how I'd like to be treated so?' I had to threaten to put the whole party under arrest, I assure you, before they could be made to remember that I was commander-in-chief there."

Hal's story was highly approved, and created no little mirth ; after which, Effie begged that Ida's "story" might be read before hers. Ida looked confused, whispered to her mother, and then said aloud : "I did not write a story. I wasn't up to it. I began, and got all the people in a forest, and didn't know how to get them out, or what to do with them. Then I burnt the whole concern up."

"You little savage!" said the general, laughing.

"I am sure Ida has something for us," observed Mr. Vane, kindly.

"I don't know, Mr. Vane, how the rest will like it ; but you know when I found that I couldn't get my people out of the woods and go on with the tale, I committed a piece of

Christmas poetry to memory, which I read in an old, old scrap-book of somebody's that I found lying around, and, if agreeable to the company, sir, I will repeat it."

Every one thought Ida's plan an excellent one. Indeed, she had displayed not only good feeling but good sense in acting as she had done, and they were all very anxious to hear her recite the poetry ; so, with the roses in her cheeks a little brighter than usual, she stood up beside her father, and began :

BENNY.

I had told him Christmas morning,
As he sat upon my knee,
Holding fast his little stockings
Stuffed as full as full could be,
And attentive, listening to me,
With a face demure and mild,
That old Santa Claus, who filled them,
Did not love a naughty child.

" But we'll be good, won't we, moder ?"
And from off my lap he slid,
Digging deep among the goodies

In his crimson stocking hid.
While I turned me to my table
Where a tempting goblet stood,
Brimming high with tempting egg-nogg,
Sent me by a neighbor good.

But the kitten, there before me
With his white paw, nothing loth,
Sat, by way of entertainment,
Slapping off the creamy froth ;
And in not the gentlest humor
At the loss of such a treat,
I confess I rather rudely
Thrust him out into the street.

Then how Benny's blue eye kindled !
Gathering up the precious store
He had busily been pouring
In his tiny pinafore ;
With a generous look that shamed me,
Sprang he from the carpet bright,
Showing by his mien indignant
All a baby's sense of right.

"Come back, Harney !" called he loudly,
As he held his apron white—
"You shall have my *candy wabbit* !" [Laughter.]
But the door was fastened tight.

So he stood abashed and silent,
In the centre of the floor,
With defeated looks, alternate
Bent on me and on the door.

Then, as by some sudden impulse,
Quickly ran he to the fire,
And while eagerly his bright eyes
Watched the flame go higher and higher,
In a brave, clear key he shouted,
Like some lordly little elf,
“ Santa Claus, come down de chimney,
Make my moder 'have herself !” [Loud laughter.]

“ Come, I'll be a good girl, Benny,”
Said I, feeling the reproof ;
And straightway I called poor Harney,
Mewing on the gallery roof.
Soon the anger was forgotten,
Laughter chased away the frown,
And they gambolled 'neath the live-oaks
'Till the dusky night came down.

[Applause and laughter.]

In my dim fire-lighted chamber,
Harney purred beneath my chair,
And my play-worn boy beside me
Knelt to say his evening prayer :

“God bless fader, God bless moder,
God bless sister—” Then a pause,
And the sweet young lips devoutly
Murmured : “God bless Santa Claus.”

[Murmurs of pleasure.]

He is sleeping—brown and silken
Lie the lashes, long and meek,
Like caressing, changing shadows
On his plump and rosy cheek.
And I bend above him weeping
Thankful tears, O Undeiled,
For a woman’s crown of glory,
For the blessing of a child.

“Beautiful, Ida !” “Oh, how nice !” “It is better than a story !” “‘Make my moder ‘have herself,’ ha ! ha ! ha !” “Very good, little daughter !” “Very pretty, Ida, and well recited !” were the words that greeted Ida on every side. Maumy chuckled in her peculiar fashion, and said she thought “that ‘ar Benny was a peert one. *He* never had no trouble after dat with managin’ de missis, she knowed !”

Peace being restored, and the children all seated quietly and expectant once more, Mrs.

Germaine opened the last envelope, and, after clearing her throat, began to read aloud Effie's original fairy story of—

THE KING AND HIS GOLDEN CROWN.

Once there was a king who was very proud of a golden crown which had been presented to him, and he was admiring himself in his glass room one day (I mean a room composed of looking-glasses), when all on a sudden his golden crown fell off, and was shivered to atoms ; and while he was standing looking with mingled fear and astonishment at his destroyed crown (the reason his crown had been destroyed was because he had refused to marry a frightful, powerful, disagreeable, and spiteful old fairy, who had done this out of revenge), he heard a loud noise like a thousand thunder-clouds bursting at once, and in the midst of the uproar the wicked old fairy appeared. She was as thin as a lath in some places, and as fat as fat could be in others. Her arms were very fat, and her fingers were as thin as splintere. The king was so astonished at seeing the fairy,

that he forgot all about his crown, and was feeling for his sword, which he had neglected to put on. The fairy approached him with open arms, and said: "King, will you marry me now?" But the king answered, "No." "You will not?" said the fairy. "Then I will show you what I can do." And the next instant he found himself sailing through the air; and as for where he was going he knew not. After a while he alighted beside a pool of water, as black as ink, called the Infernal Pool (on account of its color). On the banks of the Infernal Pool stood many beautiful maidens. They were people whom the fairy had enchanted because they would not marry her son, who was the image of his mother. After the king had been there a while, the fairy came, and after talking to them a while in the most insulting language, she touched them all with her wand, and turned them into stone. The fairy, after talking a while to the king, said: "Choose of these two things—to stay imprisoned here four years, or to marry me." But the king stuck to what he had said first.

Every week the fairy came to see if the king had resolved to marry her, so that she could liberate him. But the king always answered NO. So that the fairy was at last tired of asking him. But this frightful old fairy had a beautiful sister named Graceful. She was as beautiful as the day, and as good as she was handsome. As it happened, this pretty and amiable fairy came to visit her sister, and she chanced to take a walk on the banks of the Infernal Pool, where she saw all the beautiful prisoners; and she was very much pleased with them all, but with the king especially, and she touched them all with *her* wand, and released them from their unhappy condition, for she was more powerful than her evil, ugly sister. Then *she* asked the king to marry her, and they were married with great pomp, and lived to a happy old age, and they were beloved by all their people when they were living, and lamented by all when they were dead.*

* Copied verbatim from Effie's manuscript. She was just ten years old at the time.

"I tell you what, Miss Clara," burst out Maumy, quite beside herself with delight, "that 'ar is wonderful! Why, Lord bless de children! where on de face of de yurth did dey git ther sense? Hi yi! Lord bless my soul, just look at 'em now! I couldn't do it, if it was to save my life, make up stories out of my head like dat! Hi yi!"

"Why, Effie," said the general, "your king was a brave, splendid fellow to stand out for his own at such a rate. We must publish that fairy tale. It is really very good." The children were all delighted with the story, and crowded around Effie to ask a thousand questions concerning the bad fairy, the Infernal Pool, and the wedding. Mr. Vane called Effie "little poet," and each one had something agreeable and encouraging to say to her about her production, which she received with unaffected modesty and pleasure. Now, Mr. Vane had some days before, by way of encouraging them in their enterprise, promised, or rather insinuated, that if they would "try their best" he might possibly furnish something towards

the evening entertainment. They began to clamor for Mr. Vane's story. They hung about his knees; Effie and Ida leaned on each shoulder, and the grown-up ones of the party supported the rights of the children.

"But I have no story. I can write sermons, but not tales," said Mr. Vane, laughing.

"But you promised, you did so, Mr. Vane!" urged the inexorable children.

"I did not promise a story, children. I said, something."

"Well, let us hear it!" they clamored.

"It is poetry," pleaded Mr. Vane.

"Good! good! let us have the poetry!" shouted the children, clapping their hands and dancing around him.

"General, can't you help me to call these little outlaws to order?"

"They are only contending for their rights, sir," replied General Germaine, laughing. "I'm afraid you will have to compromise matters with them."

"Very well; I begin to believe in such things as military necessity. Sit down, you little

tyrants!" said Mr. Vane, joining in the laugh. "Sit down and be quiet, and I will read to you a Christmas Legend, written by an Italian poetess several hundred years ago. I found it among a curious collection of old Italian poetry, and will read the translation of the legend, which is considered the best, by the celebrated Father Prout, who was famous for the truthfulness and spirit of his translations." Not a whisper or rustle could now be heard. The ladies put aside their knitting, and the general fixed himself in an attitude of attention. The children's faces were lit up with the expectation of something pleasant, and also satisfaction at having gained their point. Mr. Vane took from his coat-pocket an old and worm-eaten book, whose ancient and well-worn covers inspired every one with respect, which he opened, and began to read, in his peculiarly clear and well-modulated voice, the Legend of La Zingarella ; or,

THE GIPSEY.

"There's a legend that's told of a Gipsy who dwelt
In the land where the Pyramids be ;

And her robe was embroidered with stars, and her belt
With devices right wondrous to see.

And she lived in the days when our Lord was a child
On his mother's immaculate breast ;

When he fled from his foes—when to Egypt exiled,
He went down with St. Joseph the blest.

“ This Egyptian held converse with magic, methinks,
And the future was given to her gaze ;

For an obelisk marked her abode, and a sphinx
On her threshold kept vigil always.

She was pensive, and ever alone, nor was seen
In the haunts of the dissolute crowd ;

But communed with the ghosts of the Pharaohs, I ween,
Or with visitors wrapped in a shroud.

“ And there came an old man from the desert one day,
With a maid on a mule, by that road ;

And a child on her bosom reclined—and the way
Led them straight to the Gipsy's abode ;

And they seemed to have travelled a wearisome path
From their home, many, many a league—

From a tyrant's pursuit, from an enemy's wrath—
Spent with toil and o'ercome with fatigue.

“ And the Gipsy came forth from her dwelling, and prayed
That the pilgrims should rest them awhile ;

And she offered her couch to that delicate maid
Who had come many, many a mile ;

And she fondled the babe with affection's caress,
And she begged the old man would repose :
' Here the stranger,' she said, ' ever finds free access,
And the wanderer a balm for his woes.'

" When her guests from the glare of the noonday she led
To a seat in her grotto so cool,
Where she spread them a banquet of fruits—and a shed
With a manger was found for the mule ;
With the wine of the palm-tree, with dates newly culled,
All the toil of the road she beguiled ;
And with songs in a language mysterious she lulled,
On her bosom, the wayfaring child.

" When the Gipsy anon in her Ethiop hand
Placed the Infant's diminutive palm,
Oh, 'twas fearful to see how the features she scanned
Of the babe, in his slumbers so calm !
Well she noted each mark, and each furrow that crossed
O'er the tracings of Destiny's line ;
' WHENCE CAME YE ?' she cried, in astonishment lost,
' FOR THIS CHILD IS OF LINEAGE DIVINE !'

" ' From the village of Nazareth,' Joseph replied,
' Where we dwelt in the land of the Jew ;
We have fled from a tyrant whose garment is dyed
In the blood of the children he slew.

We are told to remain 'till an angel's command
Should appoint us the hour to return ;
But 'till then we inhabit the foreigner's land,
And in Egypt we make our sojourn.'

“ ‘Then ye tarry with me,’ cried the Gipsy in joy,
‘And ye make of *my* dwelling your home ;
Many years have I prayed that the Israelite boy
(Blessed hope of the Gentiles!) would come!’
And she kissed both the feet of the infant, and knelt,
And adored Him at once : then a smile
Lit the face of the mother, who cheerfully dwelt
With her host on the banks of the Nile.”

“That was the Blessed Virgin and our Saviour—wasn't it, Mr. Vane?” asked Hal.

“Yes, my boy ; you see that our Saviour was in sorrows from his infancy up to the crowning grief of the cross—and all for us, little ones, all for us.” The comments on the legend were various, all thought it exquisitely touching, and the children, as usual, were disposed to ask innumerable questions ; but the clock struck eleven ! the little prayer-bell sounded—the Great Book was opened, and evening devotions began.

CHAPTER VII.

EFFIE'S FLIGHT WITH THE SNOW-ANGEL.

EFFIE thought, perhaps, that Flakana would come for her that very night, and she lingered around her mamma, clinging to her bosom, and caressing her long pale hands, or kissing her faded cheeks long after bedtime, and finally—after they had retired to rest—she fell asleep with her head nestled on her breast. Far in the night, when the full moon was flooding the earth with light, and making the sky look more serene, Effie was awakened by something soft and cold touching her forehead. She opened her eyes and saw, standing by her side, radiant with moonlight, the Snow-Angel, Flakana. The Snow-Angel bowed her lovely white face over Effie, and whispered: “Come, Effie, I am going to visit my father, the Snow-King, to lay before him the distresses of those whose

needs man cannot assist. If you will come and help me plead for them, you can bear witness to all I relate. Should you like to go?"

"Oh, yes, dear Flakana. But how can *I* go? I cannot fly, like a swallow!" replied Effie, laughing at the idea.

"*I* have wings, broad, fleecy wings, child, which will bear us swiftly along—aye, as swiftly as the swallows fly. Arise and put your arm about me, while I support you with one of mine—aye, that is right. Kiss your dear mother, kiss her very gently. Now—so—let us begone. Do not be alarmed. No harm shall befall you," said Flakana, in a low sweet tone.

In another moment Effie found herself, supported by the Snow-Angel's arm, floating far, far up in the moonlit heavens. Her breath grew short, and her heart fluttered, as she looked down on the silent earth, which lay cold and dim in the distance; but a feeling of perfect confidence in Flakana's ability to protect her from harm, prevented her from feeling afraid.

"Little earth-sister," said Flakana, after a

long and peaceful silence, "I have to go in this direction, on a mission to the Fire-fly Vestals—"

"Whither, Flakana?"

"Just before us," said the Snow-Angel, extending her beauteous arm, "there shines a splendid constellation. Dost know it, child?"

"I have known it ever since I was born, Flakana," cried Effie, clapping her hands. "That is the 'Southern Cross,' the beautiful Southern Cross. Are we flying southward, angel?"

"Yes, flying southward, to do my father's bidding," she answered sadly.

"*Who* are the Fire-fly Vestals, Flakana?"

"They are subjects of my father, who live in these southern lands. They have rebelled against the laws established by him; they have neglected and overturned their altar, and become perfect furies; they stir up the wasps and dragon-flies to revolt and insurrection, and give them no rest until they go out to fight in the wars they have helped raise. My father will deprive them of their lamps, and send them into exile, unless they return to their duty."

"I shall never like fire-flies again," said Effie. "I did not know they were so wicked; and the Snow-King will serve them right to take their lamps from them."

"Ah, little earth-sister, all creatures have their cruel ways. But do not think of it. Rest your head under my wing, and try to sleep."

"I will after you tell me one thing, Flakana. Did you see the 'governor,' before we came away?"

"Oh, yes. I had a long conference with him and his council. They are all wild with joy at the prospect of relief, and sent their grateful thanks to you," replied Flakana, with a sweet smile.

"He's a funny old fellow, the governor, and gets into such panics," said Effie, laughing as she thought of his last scamper from her mamma's room.

"Better rest now, little earth-sister," said Flakana, folding her wing lovingly over the child. "Try and get to sleep."

Sleep indeed! Effie did not feel in the least

sleepy, and if she had been ever so much inclined to sleep, the strange and wonderful sights she saw would have kept her wide awake. Great glowing stars, crimson, purple, green, yellow, blue, and white, were revolving and careering around them. Round and round they went, flashing and glittering with a brilliance which her eyes could scarcely endure; sometimes fast, sometimes slow, sometimes in fantastic figures, sometimes with a solemn tremulous rhythm, sometimes in whirling flights, for all the world like a Spanish dance; and the moon high up above them all, like a queen in robes of silver and pearls. But by and by they began to fade. Like tired belles at a fancy ball, all disappeared one by one, all except the moon, who pulled a veil over her head, and a single bright star in the east, which lingered there like the sentinel of night. Effie loved this star, because it stood so bravely and constant at its post; but she could not help seeing, as she watched it, that it became tremulous and pale. Suddenly she saw far down below it a gleam along the sky, then a blush of

red, then cloudy banners of purple and gold were outspread, then a fountain of golden light shot up from seas of brightness, and tossed a glittering spray far and near, gemming the cloudy banners with sapphire and ruby, and fringing them with gold, until the whole east was a-flame with their glory. Still broadened and widened the sea of light, the hills and rivers were gilded with effulgence, and the star that had kept vigil like a true knight at the portals of morning, entered within the crystal bars, and was lost to view. Up now darted bearded arrows of gold—up sprang countless spears of light, as if an array of archangels were on the advance; then the great splendid sun raised his diamond-crowned brow above the hills. Effie clapped her hands with joy at the sight—her little heart bounded with ecstasy at the view of such splendors, and she wondered if heaven could be fairer! In the fullness of her heart she sang with joy, and the sweet shrill notes of her impromptu hymn went floating out, and mingled with the clarion lays of the mocking-birds and swallows which

arose in wild melodies from the groves below. But Flakana smiled sadly. She knew what tribulation there was on earth.

Over camps where thousands of bayonets glistened in the morning light, and where the shrill notes of bugle and fife were heard summoning the armies for action; over thronged cities, all astir with rumors of battles and carnage; over inland seas, where the great fleets which threatened destruction to citadels and towns rode at anchor; over frowning mountains and silent plains, they sped along in the bright sunshine.

"I do not like this clime," at last said Flakana, whose heart was rapidly palpitating. "I never come hither unless ordered by my father."

"I like it. It is so pleasant and bright," said the child.

"There is always a pestilence here," said Flakana, sadly.

"A pestilence! But look, Flakana, is not that a woman on the lonely moor beneath us, wringing her hands and beating her breast?"

said Effie, in a trembling and excited voice, as she leaned forward and gazed curiously down.

"It is," replied the Snow-Angel, descending rapidly earthward. "She is a brown woman, and looks like a wild beast of the desert who has been robbed of her whelps. If you are not afraid, little earth-sister, ask her the cause of her trouble."*

"Poor woman," said the child very gently, as she advanced towards her from behind a clump of young hemlocks, "why do you weep?"

The brown woman turned her blood-shot eyes fiercely on the child, and made a gesture towards her as if she would strike her down.

"I could kill her," she muttered to herself between her parched lips—"I could kill her, but for the pity that is in her eye."

"I am very sorry for you," said the child. "Has any one hurt you?"

"Hurt me! Hurt me!" she exclaimed wildly. "Look here, child!" She tore open

* The story of the brown woman is true.

her dress and exhibited her swollen breasts, in which the veins looked like knotted cords, while two fountains of milk flowed from each nipple in lavish abundance over her garments, and on the dusty moor.

“*They ache !*” she screamed, beating her bosom with her fists. “They ache for my baby—my baby, who now cries and moans for what the senseless earth drinks in. Little maiden, you who shed tears for me, I am a passionate wretch—the hot blood of Africa is in my veins. Three days ago my daughter, just grown, was whipped at the whipping-post on our plantation—tied and stripped she was, and lashed by a strong man, the overseer. I knelt to my mistress, who was nursed at my mother’s breast with me. I begged her to spare my child ; but she turned coldly away from me, and said : “The girl’s temper must not be left to run riot, like mine.” The blood flew to my head. I don’t know what I did or said. I may have struck her, for I was mad ! mad ! yes, raving, crazy mad ! But whatever it was, it was unpardonable. I was sold off the

very next day—sold off from my baby and little ones. Who will tend them? Who will nurse them? Who will give suck to my starving baby?" And the brown woman threw herself upon the earth in her agony. Frightened and horror-stricken, the child flew to the Snow-Angel, and, clasping her arms about her, begged her to do something for the wretched mother.

"Alas! I can do nothing, little earth-sister. She has the *pestilence*."*

"And must she die?" wailed Effie.

"It does not always kill," replied Flakana, mournfully, as she rose swiftly in the air.

It was near evening when they reached the country of the Fire-fly Vestals. The pine forests were filled with multitudes of them, and such a buzzing, trumpeting, and chattering surely never was heard. Their lamps were seen in every direction fluttering up and down, in and out, stirring up the dragon-flies and wasps, until they were nearly blind with fury. "Go,"

* Flakana meant Slavery.

they screamed shrilly through their trumpets ;
“ go and fight for our rights ! If you don’t go to battle with the enemy, we’ll no longer notice you. We’ll have no coward sweethearts, husbands, or brothers. Arm ! arm ! arm ! If you are killed, it will be for us, and what greater honor can you desire ? Sharpen your stings ! To arms ! March ! ”

“ Whom do they want to fight ? ” asked Effie, clinging close under Flakana’s wing.

“ All the other insects, who are true to the old, safe order of things. They are in revolt against all that has hitherto made them happy and prosperous. They are all touched by the *pestilence*, and it has made them mad. But stay here, little earth-sister, while I go and deliver my message.” While Flakana was absent, Effie reclined on the soft pine-blades, which covered the earth to a great depth, and which were brown and odorous. Presently she began to push them aside, which was easy work, for they were like dried hay, and she came to the soil, over which a rich green moss was growing. Delighted at her discovery, she opened another

place, and there she found violets and blue-peeps, which she gathered and made into a bouquet for Flakana. Examining further, she found underneath the smooth slippery pine-blades mosses of every shade and hue, and tiny white blossoms, fragrant, and tinted with perite. The pine-blades kept every thing warm and comfortable there—every thing except a poor frog, stiff and cold, sprawled out on his back, his head thrown backwards, his eyes close shut, and his poor little gray hand outspread on his white waistcoat, right over his heart.

“What a pitiful sight!” murmured Effie. “He is dead, poor little thing, and I am sure those Fire-fly Vestals have stung him to death: so I’ll bury him.” And she set to work and scooped out a grave in the soft soil, lined it with pine-blades, laid him decently in it, and covered him lightly over with layers of moss and earth.

“Caw! caw! caw! caw!” shouted an old crow, as if in derision, from a bough over her head. “He is not dead!”

“Sir!” exclaimed Effie, looking up affrighted.

"I say that he is not dead. He's only asleep. He's a youngster I was warning all the fall—a thoughtless young dandy, who never looked the length of his nose ahead, and thought all old people fools. All the rest of his family went into winter-quarters in time, but the Frost-King came when he was not expected one night, and enchanted him, so there he has been lying sprawled out on his back ever since, and my wonder is, that he has not been gobbled up long ago by the wild pigs."

"Oh, dear me! What shall I do?" said Effie, in great confusion.

"Caw! caw! caw!" laughed the crow. "Nothing more. He's very safe and comfortable there; if you haven't squeezed him in too tight."

"Oh, no! he's not squeezed at all, Mr. Crow. There's very little earth and moss over him," she replied.

"You are a kind-hearted little maiden," said the crow, approvingly. "Who brought you here?"

"Flakana, the Snow-Angel."

“The Snow-Angel! Bless my soul and body! I must dress,” he cried, beginning to trim up his feathers. “I must go over and stir up the sagas of our tribe with the news, and give her a reception. You are a very kind little maiden, and some of these days I may do something for you.” So saying, off fluttered the crow, and soon afterwards Flakana returned, looking very sad, with the fleecy plumage of her wings all ruffled.

“Come, little earth-sister,” said the Snow-Angel, “we must away from here. I was scoffed at and insulted by the Fire-Fly Vestals; and the wasps and dragon-flies threatened me with imprisonment and death if I did not immediately depart. Added to the pestilence, they have all been stung by a powerful RATTLE-SNAKE, who has made himself king of the country.”

“What have they done to their Queen-Mother?” asked Effie.

“Put her to death!” sobbed Flakana, while she dashed the crystal tears from her white cheeks.

For a long while neither of them spoke, as they floated, floated, floated up into the purple, silent air. Flakana was so sad and silent that the child did not like to ask her what meant the thousands and thousands of misty shapes that were constantly floating past them. Shapes of mist, whose dim outlines resembled human forms. Effie felt awed, and concealing her face under the Snow-Angel's wing, she fell asleep. It was late in the afternoon when she awoke, with a great start; frightened out of her sleep by strange, booming, thunderous sounds, which made such tempestuous billows in the air-tides that Flakana found it extremely difficult to pursue her course.

"What is that dreadful noise?" asked the child, clinging to Flakana, as they struggled along.

"Those are the sounds of a battle," replied the Snow-Angel, sadly. "We shall have to pass near it."

"Oh, don't, don't, dear, darling Flakana. I should never sleep again if I saw a battle. Oh, dear me! to think of all the dead, white faces

turned up, and the poor wounded soldiers, crying and moaning, and the white-haired old men, like my grandpa, among them. Oh, don't, dear, sweet angel, carry me there !" plead Effie.

" Nothing shall harm thee, Effie. I cannot change my course, but I will fold one of my wings over thy eyes as we pass, and put a drop of crystal oil in thy ears, so that these terrific sounds can no longer terrify thee," said Flakana, as they approached the direction of the battlefield, above which hung dark, sulphurous clouds of smoke, through which lurid tongues of flame darted to and fro with terrific explosions. The Snow-Angel paused an instant to anoint Effie's ears with some oil of crystal, then folded her wing over her face and sailed on. Then the child no longer heard the crashing explosion of shells and cannon, and the fierce rattle of musketry ; and she nestled her face close to Flakana's bosom, under the beautiful, white, feathery wing that drooped softly over her.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT THE SNOW-ANGEL AND EFFIE SAW.

ALL at once the Angel paused in her flight, and every thing was so silent and motionless, that Effie felt frightened, and peeped out. She saw the dark battle-cloud lowering in the distance ; she saw the sun-rays slanting down, bright and golden, through the pines and hemlocks on the hills ; she saw a broad plain, skirted by a dense wood, which already looked purple in the gathering shadows ; and, afar off, she saw a broad, deep river, flashing in the tinted light. Suddenly she saw a young officer, mounted on a splendid charger, dashing across the plain at full gallop. She knew, by the blue and gold of his uniform, that he was one of those brave and knightly spirits who had offered service and life to his country, to aid in preserving its liberties, and she leaned eagerly

forward to watch his progress. Her heart bounded wildly as she saw him come speeding along over the plain, and as he drew near she saw his face, that it was noble and beautiful; then, folding her hands together, she prayed that no harm might come to him. But even while she prayed she saw two bright flashes from the dusky woods, followed by sharp explosions; the horse sprang backwards, snorting, rearing, and wildly plunging; and the young soldier, with an outcry of pain, fell from his saddle, extended on the sandy plain. A cold tremor crept through the child's veins; she felt faint and sick, and oh, so sorrowful! Flakana's heart fluttered against her own, and, upon looking up, she saw that tears were flowing over her white cheeks. A sudden, swift movement, and they were beside the fallen soldier. Others were also there. Two rough, murderous-looking men, with black tangled hair and beard, hollow cheeks, fierce, black, sunken eyes, and ferocious countenances, whose clothes of filthy gray hung about their gaunt limbs in tatters, were stooping over him. Their rifles lay on the

sands close by. Flakana touched the child's ears with a rose-tinted oil from a tiny crystal flask which she drew from her bosom, and then she heard all that was passing in the sad scene before them.

"What need of this?" feebly asked the wounded soldier. "This is not war, it is murder."

"You are the foe of the South! one of her invaders!" brusquely replied the elder of the two men, pointing to the eagles on the buttons of his uniform.

"I am, thank God! I am a foe to all who are foes to my country. I give her my poor life freely. Only I should have preferred death on the field, in fair and honorable warfare. Old man! blood spilt like mine calls to heaven like Abel's. This is martyrdom!"

"Never mind talking now," said the guerrilla chief, somewhat softly; "*you're* not the first. I and he there have brung down many like you in the same way. But, stranger, you are the first one of them all that's made me sorry for my work. Forgive me."

"Be sorry for your treason," faintly re-

sponded the young soldier. After a short silence: "As to my myself, I forgive you. CHRIST forgave His murderers; I dare not refuse forgiveness to mine." And his breath grew fainter, and a gray tint began to settle around his lips.

"Can I serve you?" asked the guerrilla chief, shading his eyes with his hand.

"Yes," replied the dying soldier, in faint, trembling tones. "In my breast-pocket there is a pocket-book. Get it out for me." The man did so, as tenderly as his rough hands knew how. "Open it, and give me the pencil you will find in it, and a letter—it is in the pocket. Thanks. Now I will—." The white lips quivered, and the soft, brown eyes grew dimmer, as, holding the pencil in his feeble fingers, he blindly wrote: "I am dying. God bless you!" All the while his life-blood was pouring away its crimson tide into the thirsty sands of the plain.

"Take this," he said feebly, "and give it to some exchanged prisoner who is going home. The address is inside the letter. For your

services take my purse ; and, as a last favor, write my name and rank—the letter will tell you all—on a rough board, and plant it at my head, so that my comrades, when they pass by this way, may know where I rest. But say”—as some painful thought wrung his heart—“will you provide me a grave ?”

“We will,” replied the guerrilla in husky tones. A look of relief passed over the pallid face of the dying soldier. His lips moved and quivered, but no sound escaped them ; the indescribable pallor of death, whitened cheek, brow, and lips, and the beautiful eyes were eclipsed. He was dead.

“Look !” whispered Flakana.

And the child, looking up through her tears, saw amidst the golden rays of the setting sun, that streamed down in luminous bars through the dark pines and hemlocks, a woman’s shape outlined, shadowy and tender : it brooded over the dead soldier ; the golden brown hair and lustrous eyes wavering and shining through the sunlit mist, and her arms extended towards him with a welcoming gesture !

"It is the spirit of his mother, who died in his boyhood!" whispered Flakana.

"Oh, Flakana! can you do nothing to recall one so brave and good to life?" sobbed the child.

"Nothing!" sighed the angel. "There is but one Lord of Life, and He is God. He is merciful as well as just, and His designs are always good, even when they are the most inscrutable. Let us adore Him;" and Flakana bowed her forehead to the earth in silent adoration of the Supreme Being who governs all things; after which she resumed her flight. Effie wept silently. Her heart was heavy with the sadness of what she had seen, and the thought of those at home who would receive that last message: "I am dying. God bless you."

"I knew him in his fair home by the Hudson," said Flakana gently, as if divining her thoughts. "Oh, child! it was always brighter there when he came. Joy sat at the board with him. The poor blessed his pleasant, compassionate face, and the sorrowful of heart loved the sound of his footsteps. He had a liberal hand, and a gentle and kindly word for

all. A father, a sister, and brother clung to him with strange tenderness and pride. All that wealth could command was at his disposal. His aspirations were noble; his aims high. Suddenly the peace that reigned over your land was rudely broken. The tainted slave-power of the South revolted against the government for its overthrow. Then arose a great cry of execration throughout the loyal countries—there was an uprising of millions—*his* heart was a-flame with the rest, at the great wrong; and he went down with countless hosts to avenge on the southern plains the cause of his insulted country, and contend with her foes for the preservation of its Liberties. He has done all that mortal could do; he has fought bravely for the Nation's Life; he has perished in its defence, without a selfish regret. Peace rest with him."

"Peace—peace—peace," came voices sweetly whispering past them, and Effie thought she saw two shadowy forms glide by.*

* In memory of a friend and brother who perished as described.

The Snow-Angel floated silently on. It was twilight. The new moon shone like a silver boat in the sky. A great bright star glittered beside her. All was peaceful there, and the depths of the silent heaven, with its millions of palpitating lights, looked solemn and holy. But still came the heavy booming of cannon from the troubled earth. The tide of battle had swept eastwardly, leaving in its track thousands of dying and dead. In a ravine, beside a rivulet, lay a fair-haired boy; his head rested on his arm; a sweet smile parted his lips and broke into dimples on his cheeks. The gold eagles on the buttons of his blue jacket flashed in the moonlight. One hand lay beside him, a pistol just dropping from the relaxed hold of his slender fingers.

“Oh, Flakana! how beautiful!” exclaimed the child, clasping her hands. “He must be very weary to sleep so soundly while the battle is raging. Let us kiss his forehead. It will not awake him.”

“Very weary no doubt,” said the angel, pityingly. “He is perhaps dreaming of home.

Do not go near him, little earth-sister. It might awake him. But I will sing to him as he sleeps—sing of those whose prayers follow him in his far-off home, and my song will make his dream brighter. And the Snow-Angel sang—

FLAKANA'S SONG.

Soldier! why art thou sleeping?
Rough is thy pillow in this dark ravine,
Uptorn the earth, blood-stained the sodden green;
Wild-flowers hang drooping in the broken light,
Shedding their leaves with an untimely blight,
Which crimson dews are steeping!

Of what can be thy dreaming?
Dost hear the whisper, through the shadows dim,
That cometh to thee of home's vesper hymn?
Dost hear the rustle of the vines at play,
And tones of loved ones, as for thee they pray
Amidst their tears fast streaming?

Smiles on thy lips yet linger,
As if low tender words stole through thy dream,
As if upon thee some dear eye did beam!
As if glad tears were hidden on thy breast,
As if a fond hand in thine own did rest,
With clasp of loving finger.

The moon had risen higher, and shone more broadly on the boy's face while the angel sweetly sang. It was very white in its silent beauty. *He was dead.*

"We will kiss him now," said Flakana softly. "Kiss him for those who were in his thoughts when he fell." Effie parted the golden clustering curls from his forehead, and stooping over, kissed it, as she would have done a brother's. It was icy cold, and in one temple there was a deep wound from which the blood had ceased flowing. He must have been dead for hours. Then sadly and silently they once more soared up into the dusky air, leaving the wild tempest of war far behind them.

It was midnight. They were floating over a primeval forest. There were generations of dead hemlocks pointing their bare white tops to the moon. Other generations, flush with life and luxuriant in leaf, quivered, rustled, and whispered in the midnight air. The sycamores, the oak, and the white pines, not to be outdone by the princes of the wild-wood, who were so lofty and proud that all envied them, tossed

their arms, and clapped their hands, and fluttered their plumes, shouting aloud ; while a white owl, vexed at an uproar that sorely disturbed his plans, as he watched for his prey, screamed "Tu-whit, tu-whoo !" and the lazy crows ruffled their black wings, and cried in a fury, "Caw ! caw ! caw !"

"Oh, dear ! how very wild and solemn is this forest ! I am sure there are goblins in it, Flakana !" whispered Effie, clinging close under the wings of the Snow-Angel.

"Yes, dreadful goblins, little earth-sister," responded Flakana ; "but do not feel afraid. They cannot harm us. The only thing I fear is the Rain Spirit. Next to the Fire Spirit he is the most ruthless enemy we have."

"Is he in this forest ?"

"Not yet, child. But I fear he is coming. The forest-trees are talking about it, and expecting him," responded the Snow-Angel, looking quickly around her.

"What shall we do if he comes ?" faintly inquired Effie.

"Seek the shelter of some cavern. I am in

search of one now. There, little earth-sister is not that a light shining through the trees over yonder?" said Flakana steering her course low over the forest, in the direction of the light.

"Oh, yes! that is a light!" exclaimed Effie joyfully. "It is in the front of a great cavern too, Flakana. Let us fly swiftly, for just then a heavy drop of rain splashed on my forehead." In another instant Flakana and the child were within a deep gloomy cavern, and the rain descended in torrents, but they were sheltered, and felt thankful to rest until the storm should cease.



CHAPTER IX.

THE INDIAN WITCH'S CAVE AND THE MAIDEN.

So rapid had been the motion of Flakana as she whisked into the cavern, that neither she nor Effie had time to notice the goblin nature of the light that had attracted them hither, until, seated upon a heap of dried leaves in a sort of alcove in the wall of rock, they shrunk back with affright, on seeing that it was not only full of faces that glowed out, and faded in again, like faces that we sometimes see in coals, but bobbed up and down, swayed to and fro, and pulled this way and that, as if frantic to get away and couldn't. No, indeed! no getting off, for it was held fast by links of great glow-worms, which the restless light kept in a fury by its incessant struggles to get away; and they flashed, and glowed, and wrig-

gled, and twisted until Effie felt quite sick and nervous watching them. From the roof of the cavern hung long splinters of crystal, and the walls were so incrustated with it that they glittered as if set with millions of diamonds and rubies. When Effie's eyes had become somewhat accustomed to the dazzling radiance that flashed out from the thousands of crystalline points all around her, and Flakana had whispered to her that they were safe, she began to peer around sharply; and while gazing back into the distant recesses, trying to make out their hidden secrets, she was startled by a prolonged growl, and saw at the same instant a blue-eyed little maiden, with long floating yellow tresses, flutter out of the shadow into the centre of the cavern, where she stood wringing her hands and looking wildly around her. Then she crept into a corner, where she sat sobbing and lamenting as if her poor heart would burst with grief. "Oh, mamma! oh, my mamma! oh! oh! oh! I am so hungry! I am so afraid! Cloco will eat me! Our Father who art in Heaven—! Oh! oh! my heart *will* break if I

can't get away!" and the little creature's prayers were broken into fragments by her sobs. Then Effie saw to her amazement that a fair and beautiful spirit, brighter than Flakana, stooped and gathered into a little casket a heap of jewels that seemed to fall from the maiden's lips and eyes. Just then came another loud terrific growl from the recesses of the cave, and out walked a great, ferocious black bear, who went up and sniffed all round the blue-eyed maiden, muttering, "She's not so fat as the rabbits." Then a moose, which had been asleep in a corner, raised his splendid antlers, winked his big sleepy eyes at the bear as he passed by, saying: "I am a light sleeper, Bruin. It is true, rabbits are better for the digestion than little girls."

"Yes, yes!" said the cowardly bully, "I like rabbits. I only want to see if Cloco had given the maid something to eat."

"Don't trouble yourself like that again, Bruin. Save your gouty toes. I'll take care of the blue-eyed maiden," said the moose nodding his antlers, which were sharp and strong.

"You're a great dandy—who but you!" muttered the bear, grinding his tusks with rage, as he went towards his lair. "I'll have a dinner off your fat haunches yet, and would have had it long ago but for your infernal antlers." Then he curled himself up, and shut his fiery eyes, pretending to be asleep.

"Oh, Flakana!" cried Effie, "is not the moose good. Ha! ha! ha! didn't he huff the fat old cowardly bear nicely. Let me go and kiss the blue-eyed maiden, and put my arms around the moose, and tell him how much I love him."

"Do so, little earth-sister," replied Flakana; "I will take a few moments' sleep, for I am very weary. But do not go near the bear."

Then Effie crept over to the maiden, crept very noiselessly, and placing her arm around her, whispered softly: "Who are you, little maid; and why do you weep?"

"My name is Fleda, and I am crying for my mamma and my brother!" she sobbed.

"Where are they, Fleda?" inquired Effie, kissing her poor little white face. "Tell me all about them, will you?"

"I don't know where they are. The savage Indians came in the dead of night, when we were all asleep, and set fire to our house; I heard dreadful yells, and my mamma's voice screaming and begging, and I heard my little brother's cries; then the chief, a frightful looking creature, all painted with stripes of black and white, with his hair painted red and standing up like bristles all over his head, took me away, and brought me here to his mother, who is a witch. Oh, me! oh, me!"

"Poor little thing, don't cry so," said Effie, compassionately. "Does she beat you?"

"Oh, yes! She beats me and starves me because I won't marry her son, the bear in the corner. The moose says he'll take care of me, and he *would* carry me away, but, you see, he's tied by the hoof and can't get off."

"I'll untie his hoof; so don't cry any more, but tell me all about that frightful light over there," said Effie, bravely.

"That light is a 'Will-o'-wisp.' The old witch found it in the swamp down in the hollow. Oh, but it frightens me almost to death.

It keeps watch there day and night ; and don't you see that it is full of faces? Well, whenever I so much as move, they all turn round, and grin and nod at me."

"Where is the witch to-night?"

"Gone down to the river to catch jumping mullets. It is her favorite fish, and as they are caught only by night, she is very often away nearly all night."

"I hear a strange, shrill, puffing noise. Does the wind sound like that here?" asked Effie, starting around.

"That is Cloco coming," cried the child, trembling in every limb. "Run, run and hide, little girl, or she'll eat you!"

"Won't she eat you?"

"No. She wants me to marry her son the bear. Now run," said the blue-eyed maid, kissing Effie.

"Moose, good moose," whispered Effie, as she ran past, "I've got a nice sharp little knife in my pocket, and I will cut the rope that fastens you to the wall, if you will take the blue-eyed maid away to-night."

"Bless your bright black eyes, that I will," said the moose; "but run away, the witch is coming."

Sure enough, with cloud and wind—with a wheezing and puffing—in she whirled. Her eyes were like balls of fire, her nose like a big sweet potato, and full of knobs. Her mouth had snags instead of teeth, and was big enough to swallow a pumpkin. Her ears were so large that they flapped to and fro whenever she moved, and her skin was brown and shrivelled. She looked at least a thousand years old.

"Halloo!" she screamed, "I smell strangers! Who's here? Don't you hear me—who's here?" she roared, shaking the poor maiden by the shoulder.

"No one. I see no one," she gasped.

"No one, do you say? I'll eat your pale face if you tell me lies."

"Indeed I see no one, Cloco. I am blind with crying. But I won't cry any more, if you don't scold."

"And you'll marry my son to-morrow?"

"Yes, I'll marry Bear to-morrow—if I am here," she added, in a low whisper.



“What’s that? what’s that? I hear you. ‘If you are here.’ So, where do you expect to be, pale face?” cried the witch, fiercely clutching her arm.

“Dead,” answered the maiden. “Don’t you see that I shall die if I don’t get something to eat—I am so hungry?”

“My son’s bride must not starve,” replied the frightful witch, with a smile that increased her ugliness to such a degree that Effie almost screamed out, she was so terrified. Then she dived her hand down into her deep pockets, and said: “Here—here’s baked dog’s meat, here’s broiled partridge, here’s some maize cakes, and some wild celery and grapes. Take them all, my beauty, and go over yonder in that corner where the dried leaves are heaped up, and eat your supper while I clean my fish.”

“Thank you! oh, thank you, Cloco! Won’t we have a brave wedding feast to-morrow!” exclaimed the maiden, as she gathered all the nice things together in her apron. She looked at the moose, and then he winked his great black eyes at her; then what should she do

but run into the very corner where the Snow-Angel and Effie were concealed ; but Flakana was invisible to her. She divided her supper with Effie, who gave the nicest bits to Flakana. Then they whispered together and grew merry, laughing in their sleeves at the old ogress, who was singing in fearful tones a scalping song which made the cavern resound, while she cleaned her mullets. Effie peeped around at the moose, and the moose peeped at Effie, and they winked their black eyes at each other, until they came near laughing out at the idea of outwitting the cruel old hag.

“What are those things flaunting there in the wind at the entrance of the cavern?” asked Effie.

“Scalps of women and children murdered by her sons !” answered the maiden simply.

“Oh, the cruel, cruel wretch !” cried Effie, shuddering, as she set her white teeth together, and felt in her pocket for her knife. “Look here, blue-eyed Fleda,” she added, as she drew it out and opened the bright blade : “Just so so soon as she goes to sleep I’ll cut the rope

that binds the moose ; do you mount his back, and then off like the wind." It was well for Effie that the wind was making a great tumult around the cavern just then, otherwise Cloco must have heard and discovered her.

"But the lights over there ! they are full of eyes, and when any thing goes wrong the Will-o'-Wisp whistles like a trumpet !" sobbed the maiden.

"What shall I ever do, then ?" asked Effie, despondingly.

"Do you see that great, wriggling, pop-eyed glow-worm at the bottom of all the rest ?" whispered the maiden Fleda in a low, frightened tone. "He holds them all tight. He is an enchanted Sioux brave, who killed one of Cloco's sons in battle. Cut his head right off with the sharp blade of your knife, then out go all the rest. I heard her tell the secret to the bear last night."

"That's easy. Only I don't want to murder the Sioux brave," said Effie stoutly.

"It won't kill him ; it will disenchant him," said Fleda.

"What's that you're saying?" shouted the witch, laying about her with the short paddle with which she beat the water when she was catching mullets. She had been nodding over the coals after a surfeit of baked dog-meat and fish, and having almost lost her balance, she awoke just in time to hear the sound of Fleda's whisper.

"I am talking to the mole over here in the corner!" cried Fleda.

"Go to sleep, go to sleep, or I'll break your ribs like a sparrow," she roared. Then she snored and snored, until the air in the cave trembled with the horrid noise.

Flakana, awakened by the sounds of the witch's snoring, looked out to see if the storm had ceased, and, to her great joy, perceived that the stars were shining and not a cloud was to be seen. Effie crept around behind the witch, slowly and lightly, her penknife open in her hand: the bear gave a loud unearthly growl in his lair; the witch gave a snore that sounded like the charge of a trumpet, and reeled and tottered on her seat over the coals, until Effie

thought she'd tip over every instant. She reached the moose, and knelt down to cut the deer-skin rope that confined him to the cavern wall. Swiftly she plied the blade, deftly she cut shred after shred of the tough ligaments with her strong little fingers, until the last one was severed, and the noble moose was free. He licked her hands, and whispered: "Send the maiden Fleda to me. Do you and the beautiful angel go out swiftly, cut the glow-worm's head off as you go, and wait for us near the shore of the lake that lies at the foot of the mountain beyond the forest."

Effie slipped back, laughing fit to kill herself at what she had done; then she told Flakana and the maiden all that had passed. Flakana placed her arm about Effie, and Fleda went on tiptoe as noiselessly as a shadow to the lair of the moose, and after embracing him she mounted on his back and held on tight to his antlers. At the same moment Effie bravely cut off the big glow-worm's head, and off bounded the Will-o'-Wisp, bobbing crazily up and down through the wet forest, leaving the cavern in

sudden darkness, except where a few coals glowed at the witch's feet. With a strong swift leap the moose sprang up, and jumping quite over the old hag, struck her senseless with his hind hoofs; and Effie thought she saw a dusky warrior in war plumes dancing over her, with an uplifted knife in his hand, as the moose, with Fleda on his back, dashed into the depths of the forest with a cry of exultation.

"We have no more time to spare, little earth-sister. After we meet our friends on the lake shore we must speed on our journey." In a short time they saw the waters of the lake gleaming in the moonshine, and swiftly descending to the shore, were met by the moose and the blue-eyed Fleda, who thanked Effie over and over again for her kindness, in so bravely rescuing them both from a bondage more bitter than death.

"I am glad now that the rain drove us into that cavern," said Effie, whose heart expanded with happiness. "I thought it was dreadful at first. But, good moose, I thought I saw a plumed warrior dancing over the prostrate body of the cruel witch."

"That was the Sioux brave, whose enchantment you ended by cutting off the big glow-worm's head. He will kill her, no doubt," answered the moose.

"Oh, dear me, I hope not!" cried Effie, shrinking back. "That is dreadful."

"Justice is terrible," said Flakana, "when crime is punished. Were it otherwise, where would the sons and daughters of earth fly for refuge from the excesses of the wicked? We have helped each other to-night against the wicked. Remember, then, O children of earth, that even in your darkest griefs, there are others even still more grieved, whom you may console and aid. We must part. Aldebaran is winking, and Arcturus pales in the approaching dawn. Farewell, blue-eyed maiden. May you find those you seek. Farewell, faithful moose. May no hunter's arrow ever pierce your noble heart." Effie threw her arms around Fleda and kissed her, and caressed the face of the good moose, as he bowed his antlers over her head, and looked a loving farewell out of his great soft eyes.

CHAPTER X.

HOW THE CROW RESCUED THEM.—THE OLD SAGA.

A RAPID and ceaseless flight, which continued from dawn until twilight, took them far on their journey. And now that the shadows of night were floating silently up from the west, the Snow-Angel felt the need of a few hours' rest for herself and the child, and descending swiftly earthward, sought a place of repose in a dusky, weird-looking forest. The trees were all lofty, with long, tangled gray mosses hanging from their topmost branches to the very earth. Hanging, and waving in every breath of wind, they were like so many elfish banners, which gave every thing in that shadowy place a grim and haunted aspect. Flakana soon found a sheltered, mossy spot, into which the dead leaves had drifted in heaps ; while over-

head, and all around them, drooped the gray tangled mosses, curtaining them about like a tent.

“We will rest us here, little earth-sister,” said the Snow-Angel: “rest and sleep for a while.” And the child, weary enough, rested her head on Flakana’s bosom, and, covered with her soft wings, soon fell asleep. She did not know how long she had slumbered—it seemed but a very short time to her—when she was awakened by Flakana’s starting up, trembling and in haste, and, casting a frightened glance about her, she saw a deep red glow shining through the trees, and the weird-like mosses were swaying distractedly to and fro; whilst hopping around their feet, with frantic gestures, a crow flapped his black wings, and shouted, “Caw! caw! caw!” at the top of his voice. Hissing sounds, and a fierce crackling roar, accompanied by an intolerable heat, were now heard, while the fiery glow deepened and brightened through the bare trees and the swaying mosses.

“Caw! caw! caw! caw! caw!” still scream-

ed the crow. The lurid light and the dismal sounds increased every instant.

“Bless my heart, Mr. Crow,” exclaimed Effie, impatiently, “did you never see the sun rise before?” The Snow-Angel trembled and looked affrightedly around her. At last she faltered out: “It is the Fire Spirit, child, our greatest and most powerful enemy. We are surrounded by his legions, and I fear there is no escape—”

“Caw! caw! caw! caw! caw!” shouted the crow, fluttering upon Effie’s shoulder.

“No escape. If we attempt to rise upwards, we shall be scorched to death. Are you afraid to die, little earth-sister?”

“Oh, it is a dreadful thing,” cried the child, wringing her poor little hands, and thinking of her pale mother and her sisters and brother at home.

“Caw! caw! caw!” screamed the crow on her shoulder. “I was so scared that I lost the power of speech,” he said. “I have not forgot your kindness to the miserable frog. I have followed you. I saw the fire attack the old

moss-trees. I awoke the Snow-Angel. Follow me. Follow me. Caw ! caw ! caw !”

Off he hopped around a thick clump of furze-bushes, further back into the forest, and down into a hollow which the spirits of flame had not yet reached, although they were coming swiftly, with a mad roar, towards it, and thousands of sparks were flying, like fire-tipped arrows, in glittering showers among the dry leaves.

“Now’s your time,” said the crow, flapping out the sparks with his dusky wings as fast as they fell. “Rise swiftly, Angel Flakana—swiftly, before your fierce enemy discovers your flight.”

“We will meet again, generous crow. My father, the Snow-King, will reward your kindness,” said Flakana, who was almost overcome by the presence of her dreadful enemy.

“Never mind thanking me now,” said the crow, looking foolish. “Do you get out of this as swiftly as your wings can bear you, with the little earth-maiden.” Then, placing her arm about Effie, the Snow-Angel arose, slowly at first, then more swiftly, then stronger and in

stronger flights, until at last they were beyond all reach of danger ; while the faithful crow remained where they had left him, and continued to beat out the sparks with his wings until they were out of sight. The whole heavens were alight with the blazing forest, and as from afar off they looked in that direction, it appeared like a sea of fire rolling great billows of flame from shore to shore. They feared that the faithful and generous crow had lost his life in serving them ; but far in the night, when all had become dark and silent around their flight, they heard a fluttering of awkward wings, and the signal cry of the crow in the distance, who was seeking his way homeward through the dusky shadows. Effie called out with all her might, to let him know that all was well with them, but he had drawn his hood over his ears to keep out the cold, and did not hear her.

“ Oh, Flakana ! I will never despise a crow again. He saved our lives,” said the child.

“ Little earth-sister, it is not among the great, or the rich, or the beautiful that we must look for the noblest acts, nor must we despise any

living creature. The despised crow saved us, when the eagle, the handsome wild pigeons with their shining plumage, the orioles, and the red-breasts fled shrieking out of the forest, thinking of nothing but their own safety."

"The dear old crow! I wish he'd come with us," cried the child. "But, Flakana, I am sleepy—so sleepy and cold! Oh, dear, it is bitterly cold!"

"Have courage, darling earth-sister. Press closer to my bosom, and put your poor little benumbed fingers underneath my wings. We must fly swiftly, swiftly. I must use both my wings. We must hasten with full speed now to my father's court. The perils we have escaped give strength to my wings. When we get to the Golden Islands, a pearl chariot drawn by white swans will be waiting for us. Then our worst troubles will be over."

"The Golden Islands! Where are they?"

"In a sea which lies far beyond the ice mountains of the north. Ice mountains which guard the calm seas that stretch around my father's dominions. No ship can ever get into

those bright, silent seas, and no living thing except the arctic whale, the white bear, seals, eagles, and swans and penguins," replied the Snow-Angel.

"Oh, how I wish we were there! The Golden Islands, and the pearly chariot drawn by swans! I never heard of any thing so grand," murmured the child, half asleep. Beautiful visions floated through her brain until a profound slumber stole over all of her senses. On, and on, and on, they sped; over blue sunlit mountains; over richly variegated countries; over bright flashing seas; over ancient cities; over ruined temples; over smoking volcanoes; over flowery valleys; over bleak and 'craggy shores, and endless forests, the Snow-Angel held her swift way. She knew not where the angry spirits of Rain and Fire might be lurking, and feared to rest. By and by they came to a country where the snow lay in unbroken whiteness over hill and vale, where men dressed in skins, and where their breath froze on their beard, and left long icicles depending from every hair. Where only the gray eagle and white stag

could live in the open air. Where millions and millions of diamonds seemed strewn over the surface of the snow, and where the lightest breeze would set in motion millions of frozen atoms, which glistened in the sunlight like floating stars. Where the streets of the cities were nearly deserted, and where at last the Snow-Angel, wearied with her ceaseless flight, was obliged to take refuge in the bell-tower of a great cathedral, from whose altars and choirs incense and music arose together, and the child heard thousands of voices blending together in one grand chorus, singing—

Rest, ye worldly tumults, rest!

Here let all be peace and joy :

Grief no more shall rend our breast,

Tears no more shall dim our eye—

Khavalsim Boga!

Kavalim Boga! Kavilim Boga! Kavalim Boga!*

Up swelled the chorus “Hallelujah,” like the sound of the surging sea, making the bells in

* The hymn chanted in the Russian churches during the “Procession of the CUP.”

the tower shiver with a joyous thrill; and Flakana, folding her hands on her bosom, sang softly with them, "Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" With these sounds of joy and triumph pealing in mellow tones around her, the child fell asleep. The bright sunlight, gleaming in her eyelids, awoke her, and she saw that they were far on their journey. Towards evening the Snow-Angel descried something far below them that pleased her, and floating swiftly down, stood, with Effie, on the shores of a beautiful lake, where a great many swans, white and black, were disporting and spreading out their soft plumage to the sun's rays. As soon as they saw Flakana they uttered shrill cries of joy, and came flocking around her; and she spoke gentle and loving words to them, caressing their beautiful, soft plumage, and allowing them to kiss her hands.

"I have not a moment to stay," she said, kindly. "I have only come to beg a cloak for my little earth-sister here, who is very cold."

"Oh, yes! oh, yes! oh, yes!" cried several at once. "Wait a moment, fair Angel. Wait

a moment. Up there, hanging on the trees, are our down-cloaks. She shall have the handsomest of them all." In a short time they brought the Snow-Angel an elegant cloak of eider-down, which she wrapped about the almost frozen limbs of the child, who thanked the kind swans in a few modest, grateful words, which pleased them amazingly; after which, clasping Flakana's waist, they swiftly soared up again into the cold and glittering air.

That evening the sun was setting clear and crimson behind the snow-clad mountains. It was intensely cold; so bitterly cold that Flakana's wings were almost frozen, and she told the child that they must spend the night in a cavern. Flakana soon espied a cave, and quickly descending, they entered its broad opening. Far back they saw an old Saga, with a white beard reaching to his waist, and wrapped in a fur cloak, warming his fingers over a charcoal fire. Above his head, on a projection of rock, was perched a splendid white eagle, who was asleep. "We are with friends," whispered Flakana joyfully.

The Saga arose as soon as he saw the strangers, and came forward to offer them the hospitalities of his abode. The eagle, hearing the sound of voices, fluttered his strong pinions and stretched out his neck, winking his fierce red eyes at the Saga's guests ; then, with a shrill scream of welcome, he flew down from his perch and nestled at Flakana's feet.

"Why, old Eric, art thou here?" exclaimed the Snow-Angel, smoothing his white crest.

"Yes, Angel Flakana. His majesty the Snow-King, uneasy at thy long absence, sent me to these outskirts of his dominions in search of you."

"Thanks, faithful Eric. I hope to reach Labra Arc to-morrow. Good Saga, may we rest—my little earth-sister and I—here to-night?"

"I shall feel too much honored to have such guests. Flakana's name is no stranger to me. The best that my poor cave affords is at thy disposal," replied the Saga, leading the way to the recesses of the cave, where he offered them a resting-place on a pile of skins and swan's-

down. Then he warmed some porridge over the coals, and brought a bowl of reindeer's milk and some dried fruits and fish, which he courteously spread out before them. The child thought it a famous feast, and ate her fill, while she grew merry with the venerable Saga, whose keen blue eyes, red cheeks, and long snowy beard delighted her ; besides, he was so kindly and gentle in his ways, that, after supper, she crept close to him, and sitting at his feet, leaned her arms upon his knees while he conversed with Flakana. Conversed in a language which she could not understand, and she was much too well-bred a child to interrupt them every instant to ask what they were talking about. But the upshot of the conversation was, that Eric, the white eagle, was dispatched instantly back to the Snow-King to announce the coming of Flakana and the child. Awhile longer, Effie watched the countenances of the Saga and the Snow-Angel. It sounded like gibberish, what they were saying, but it was enough for her to see the pleasant smiles breaking over Flakana's face, and see the keen

blue eyes of the Saga dancing with delight, and his white, silky beard shaking with laughter. After awhile, turning to the child, he laid his hand softly on her head, saying: "Thou art a good, patient little one, and I will tell thee a story concerning a *very* strange thing that happened to my grandfather once. Ha! ha! You understand me, now that I speak French. I learnt French at Moscow, when I was tutor to the sons of the Czar."

"I shall be very glad to hear a story, Saga. There's nothing I like half so well," replied Effie, pleasure beaming on her countenance.

"Very well, my child. My grandfather was a great naturalist, and this strange thing actually happened to him. It is recorded in the Muscovite annals. Now listen. My grandfather was a *Vakir*, and devoted himself to science and religion. One day in his rambles he trod where the ground re-echoed his footsteps. 'It must be hollow here,' thought he: 'I will dig, and I shall find a treasure.' He dug, and discovered a spring, from which a naked and beautiful maiden sprung forth. 'Who art

thou, loveliest daughter of Heaven?' said he. 'My name,' she replied, 'is TRUTH: lend me thy mantle.' This he refused to do, and she hastened to the city, where the poets found fault with her figure, and the courtiers with her manners, and the merchants with her simplicity. She wandered about, and none would give asylum, till she fell in with the court news-writer, who thought she might prove a very useful auxiliary. But she blotted out whatever he composed, so that no news was published for many days; and the sultan sending for his news-man to inquire the cause of his silence, was told the history of the intrusive guest, who was in consequence summoned to court. Here, however, she was so extremely troublesome, turning every thing upside down with her straightforward questions and answers, that it was determined to convey her away, and the sultan ordered her to be buried alive in his garden. His commands were obeyed by his courtiers; but TRUTH, who always springs up in the open air, arose from her grave, and after wandering about for some time found the door

of the public library open, and going in she amused herself with burning all the books that were there, except two or three. Again straying forth in search of an abode she met a venerable Saga, to whom she told her sad story. He received her into his house with cordial welcome, and invited her into his museum of stuffed birds and beasts, and preserved insects. 'Thou hast no discreetness,' he said. 'In the world thou art forever getting into scrapes. Now, take the counsel of an old man ; make this museum thy abode. Here thou hast a large choice of society, and here thou may'st dwell in peace.' Truth found the advice so reasonable that she adopted it ; since when, her voice is only heard in the language of fable, and her chosen interpreters are the animal creation." *

"Aha ! I think I understand !" exclaimed the child, and laughing merrily and clapping her hands. "I have a story to tell, also. One day a lady came to see my mamma, and brought

* From the Russian.

with her her daughter, who was about fourteen years old, who told my sister that 'she did not think her beautiful at all, although she believed she was very good.' And her mamma turned red, and said: 'My love, I am quite shocked. Will you never have tact?' And she said, half crying: 'What is tact, mamma? Is it telling lies? If *that* is tact, I don't want it.' The old Saga and Flakana laughed, and he smoothed the dark clustering hair back from the child's forehead, and looked down into her black flashing eyes with wonder. He had never seen in all his long life before a human being with black eyes, and they were as great curiosities to him as black diamonds would be to us.

"Aha!" he said, "thou wilt, one of these days, make it out. Go to sleep now, little tired one, and dream about it." So he stooped over and kissed the child's head, then he blessed her and bade them good-night. Wrapped in her eider-down cloak, Effie cuddled herself up on her couch of skins, and after ruminating on all that the Saga had told her, she fell into a sweet refreshing sleep.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MIDNIGHT SUN.—THE SNOW-KING'S PALACE.

THE next morning by day-dawn the Snow-Angel, having bid the venerable Saga a friendly adieu and folded the child safe and warm under her wing, resumed her flight, soaring and skimming through the frosty air with a motion as rapid as a swallow's. The cold was so intense that the child dared not uncover her face to see whither they were going; but towards evening, the sharp cutting breeze having died away, Flakana put aside the eider-down cloak, and, kissing her forehead, bade her look around her, and she ventured to peep out. They were then hovering over a frozen ocean, covered in some places with huge blocks of ice, and in others with irregular formations which looked like frozen surf. No living things

were to be seen, except great shaggy white bears prowling about, and long processions of penguins, which stood as motionless as if they were frozen; and the only sign that they were not, was a peculiar, drowsy-sounding, "Auk! auk! auk!" which wound through the still frozen air like the blowing of distant horns. All around the margin of the ocean, as far as the eye could reach, and rising in some places from its midst, were lofty hills of crystal, castles and cathedrals, steeples, obelisks, and towers of solid ice, which were all gleaming, as if set with diamonds, in the golden light of the setting sun. Every color of the rainbow flashed around them, and the highest peaks were burning with crimson and gold.

"These, little earth-sister, are the dominions of my aunt the Ice-Witch, but we have no time to stop," said Flakana.

The child was sorry that they could not stop for a little while, that she might hear what the bears were in such a rage about, and what the penguins were talking of, as they stood there, for all the world, like a procession of Domini-

can monks, thinking grave and solemn thoughts. But the Snow-Angel told her that they were not very far then from the Golden Islands, and she was quite satisfied, because she knew that there the pearly chariot drawn by white swans awaited their coming. She had been thinking and dreaming of them the whole day with such anticipations of delight, that every instant appeared long until she saw them. But by and by a dreadful thought passed through her mind, and she called Flakana.

“What is it, darling?” asked the Snow-Angel.

“See, Flakana!” she said, pointing to the sun, now almost out of sight. “It will be night presently, and the swans may not see us when we get there, and so go away.” Flakana smiled, and paused a few moments with her face towards the west, and, to the child’s amazement, the sun, which she thought had disappeared for the night, majestically lifted his splendid disk above the marge of the frozen ocean, with a slow and solemn motion; brightening up the dreary, death-like scenes with

dazzling glory, he slanted eastward, until a noontide splendor lit the air, and the ice-peaks flamed again in his rays.

“We shall have light enough, little earth-sister,” said Flakana, smiling, as she smoothed back the thick curls from the child’s wondering face. “This is what we call our ‘midnight sun;’ but it is only at certain periods of the year that we see—what is, even to us spirits—this magnificent spectacle. In my father’s empire the days are very short and the nights extremely long, but more brilliant than any thing this side heaven, with resplendent and glittering lights of every hue, which make the snowy wastes and plains appear as if they were strewn with rainbows. It is brighter at night there than the brightest noonday elsewhere. Our flight will soon be ended. Beyond that barrier of ice-mountains, where the sea is blue and bright, and upon whose shore no human foot has ever trodden, lie the Golden Isles. They are immense blocks of amber, white and red coral, and rare sea-shells, all thrown and blended together with beautiful

islands, which are tufted with sea-mosses and flowers of indescribable loveliness. White, and crimson, and blue sea-birds skim the sea, and make their nests among the cliffs of the Golden Isles; and the white whale, the dolphin, and black swans, whose plumage is tipped with gold, disport around them." The child listened, almost wild with expectation.

When they reached the Golden Islands, Flakana, ever on the lookout, showed the child where the chariot of pearl was moored. There it was at last! rocking gently on the undulating waves, while the swans, which were harnessed to it, patient and drowsy, were blinking at the goldfish that were swimming in shoals around them. Here the bitter coldness of the air was softened, and the sun shone out warm and pleasant. Gazing around with a sensation of rapture at all the loveliness so lavishly spread out on every side, the child noticed that along the shores of this beauteous sea trees were growing, which appeared to reach the very clouds, covered with clusters of flowers whose rich fragrance perfumed the air. Strange birds, with

plumage of white, of crimson, of blue, of green, and of yellow, all bespangled with spots of gold, uttering wild joyous notes, darted through the air. Towards the north arose a barrier of lofty mountains, which were covered with perpetual snows.

Then the Snow-Angel and the child took their seats in the shell of pearl, which could be used either as a boat or a chariot; when, with a glad flutter of their downy wings and a low musical murmur of welcome, the swans drew them swiftly over the bright, peaceful billows. The child threw off her cloak of eider-down, and joyously trailed her hands in the spray made by the swift motion of the swans. But the Snow-Angel was silent, and when the child looked at her, wondering at her silence, she appeared so languid and tremulous that she feared that she was dying.

“What is it, darling Flakana? Are you ill?” she asked, looking through her tears into the Snow-Angel’s languid eyes.

“The heat of this region, little earth-sister, always makes me languid, and I feel a dread of

the water. If even a drop should get on me it would make a terrible wound," she replied faintly.

"Can they not fly?" inquired the child, pointing towards the swans.

"I thought you were tired of being in the air, darling one, and that it would please you to float over this beautiful sea," replied the Snow-Angel feebly.

"I *was* tired of being in the air, and *do* like floating over the bright waves; but I can take pleasure in nothing that harms you, Flakana," outspoke the generous child. "Let us mount at once into the air."

The Snow-Angel kissed her with a sense of great relief, and uttering some words in an unknown language to the swans they rose rapidly into the upper air, where they glided along so smoothly that the child was lulled to sleep by the motion. When she awoke, the stars were glittering around their course, and high up, above all the rest, blazed one of great size and splendor, towards which the swans seemed to steer their way.

"We shall soon reach my father's court," said Flakana. "Yon star shining before us with such splendor is the beacon-light from the turret of his palace; and it is guarded by a huge bear, whose nose, ears, paws, and tail are decorated with diamonds larger than a man's head; which were presented to him ages ago by the Sovereign of all the heavens."

"How wonderful! Shall we see the bear?" exclaimed the child.

"No, little earth-sister; we can only see his decorations. See how they glitter as the palpitations of his great heart keep them in motion! Their dazzling brightness conceals him."

"I should be afraid of him," said the child in an awed tone. "Indeed I begin to feel dreadfully afraid in this strange country. Is your father a giant?"

"Yes, he is a giant."

"Does he eat people?"

"Sometimes, when he is very angry, he does," answered Flakana, with drooping head.

"Oh, Flakana! suppose he is angry when we get there?" asked the child with a shudder.

“Have courage little one. I will try and save thee!” replied the Snow-Angel. “My father is not cruel, but sometimes he is worked up to great furies by the misdeeds of his subjects, and then, being quite crazed, he gives orders and does things for which he is very sorry,” said Flakana.

“But if he tears me to pieces in his fury, his sorrow won’t bring me alive again!” said the child growing very white. “Let us return.”

“Thou art going to him for a good purpose ; thy conscience is fair, and having dared all these perils in a good cause, wouldst thou turn back?” said the Snow-Angel, with a grieved look. “Be more brave in thy innocence, child, and more assured in the justice of thy cause.” The child was silent and pondering for some time ; then her courage arose again, and when she thought of the poor little starving, helpless creatures at home, she felt ready to brave any danger for their relief. “I can but die,” she said at last, looking up with a brave smile into Flakana’s face. “If the worst comes, I can

but die. Only do not leave me, dear angel, even for an instant, after we get to the Snow-King."

"Be sure of that, precious earth-sister. Thy life is my own now. Any violence that may cause your death will extinguish my life," replied the Snow-Angel, embracing her.

On, swiftly, and more swiftly, on they speed. Wonderful and glorious lights began to gleam over the snow-mountains, and along the white endless plains. Now crimson, now purple, now orange, now white, now violet, now green, now pink, the glittering wavering beams shifted to and fro; while pale golden and flame-colored sparks glistened in myriads, through their tremulous hues. Changing and shifting, blending together in magnificent masses, kindling up the night with the untold glory of sunrise; separating to throw fiery streams out on the wind, or pausing for an instant to pile the heavens with majestic columns of crimson and gold: there was no rest. As the swans approached more near, the child discerned thousands of fair spirits, with bright diamond-

hilted lances, gliding amidst this wondrous effulgence, who were clad in gorgeous robes, and wore girdles of jewels about their waists; who tilted at each other with their lances, which, clashing together, rang out on the air with a constant silvery clicking, which sounded for all the world like the tinkling of ten thousand guitars. Nearer and nearer flew the swans towards the gold and crimson clime, and the child feared that she should be scorched by the fiery brightness, or that some of those flashing lances might suddenly strike Flakana or herself a mortal wound.

“Have no fear, little earth-sister. Those are my father’s subjects,” said the lovely Snow-Angel, folding her arms about the child as they sailed right into the splendors of this wonderful and glorious region. Parting, right and left, the restless beautiful spirits, with lances and banners, opened a way for their swan-steeds; and as they bore them swiftly along, the spirits all bowed their heads, couched their gleaming lances, and waved their banners in homage to the Snow-Angel, chanting all the

while a song of welcome, to which they kept time with the ringing of their lances. The child was in raptures! She stretched out her hands, and held out her arms to clasp the beauteous forms that floated around them; but with a look of affright in their wild glorious eyes, they fled back, shrinking from her touch: so she was contented to sit perfectly still, and smile, nod, and wave her hands towards them.

“Has this region no name, loved angel?” inquired the child.

“Yes. This is the region of a great enchantress, named Aurora Borealis, who is tributary to my father. We are now on its confines. Beyond those gray peaks is my father’s abode,” answered Flakana.

At last they came in sight of a lofty palace of snow and crystal built on one of the topmost crags of a high mountain range. Its windows were rubies, amethysts, emeralds, and topaz; all glittering so splendidly in the sunlight that the child was obliged to turn away her eyes. As the swans were bearing them rapidly towards it, the white eagle which they had met in the

Saga's cave, came flying at full speed to meet them, and told Flakana that the Snow-King was on the top of a neighboring mountain, engaged in very important matters of state, and could not receive them until the next day ; but that he had issued orders to his servants to obey her, and to attend to the entertainment of her guest, on the peril of their lives. He sent his love and greeting ; but from some cause or other, he was in such a state of wrath that it was more than one's life was worth to venture into his presence. Flakana gave the white eagle a string of diamonds, which she threw over his crested head ; then he kissed her hand, and with a brighter light in his fierce red eyes, he soared away with a scream of exultation.

"Give my best love to the Saga, my very best love, if you see him," shouted the child.

Soon they descended into the court of the palace, and Flakana, with a kiss of welcome, led the child into the great feasting hall. The floor was covered with carpets of eider-down, and a long table of amber stood in the centre of it, upon which sparkled wines in gob-

lets of crystal and gold, and where blushed the fruits of every clime—grapes, figs, oranges, peaches, melons, and apples. And while the child, reclining on a divan, where she had thrown herself down to rest, gazed around her with wonder, in tripped a *chamois*, then another, and another, and another, carrying gravely on their backs roasted boar's meat spiced, an oyster-pie, an omelette soufflé of sea-birds' eggs, and a boiled turbot. These were followed by a young, white bear, who brought in the bread-basket; all of which viands were nicely arranged on the amber table by a large brown stag, with a white napkin pinned about his neck, who—having placed each one of the platters with mathematical nicety—courteously invited Flakana and her guest to dinner. The child ate, and laughed, and talked, and asked questions without number; but observing that the Snow-Angel was quiet and sad, she remembered what she had told her about the Snow-King's eating people, and she became very silent, and began to think of home.

“Don't be cast down, little earth-sister.

From certain signs which I have noticed, I think that my father will be gentle with thee," said Flakana, passing her arm fondly about the child. "Cedric, send thy daughters hither to play with the maiden."

Cedric—that was the stag's name—instantly went out, and soon returned with two beautiful milk-white fawns, whose eyes were large and brown, whose mouths were red, and whose hoofs were shod with silver. They were twins, and were never separated, day or night. At first they glanced wildly and timidly towards the earth-child; then, obeying a signal from the Snow-Angel, they bounded towards her, and knelt at her feet to be caressed. Then she introduced them to the child, whose hands they kissed; after which they danced gracefully around her, saying to each other: "Beautiful is the stranger! Sweet is the fragrance of her breath! Bright is the love-light in her eyes!" The child blushed and said:

"I understand all that you say. Do not talk of me, if you please. Let us talk of yourselves. Tell me who you are, and what are your names?"

"Our names are Hilda and Vidda, the daughters of Cedric, who is the Snow-King's major-domo," replied Hilda. "Our mother is dead, and the Princess Flakana adopted us. Where do you live, black-eyed stranger?"

Then the child told them of her adventures, and why she had undertaken the journey.

"I wish," exclaimed Hilda, "that you had brought that funny old governor along. It would have been such sport!"

"I hope the Snow-King will pity the poor oppressed creatures," said Vidda; "but he's in a dreadful humor now with his two sons, for some reason or other. One dares scarcely speak to or look at him. We scamper off, fit to break our necks, whenever we hear him coming."

"His sons?" said the child, while her heart sank within her.

"Yes! The North and East Wind. They have given him great trouble of late, but I don't know how. I only know that it has kept us all in a half-frantic way for some time past, they go on so. Don't you feel afraid of the Snow-King, dark-eyed stranger?"

"Yes I do," answered the child, bravely, "but I came here for no harm or ill towards any living thing. I only came to beseech him to help the poor and miserable little creatures near my home, whose condition he ought to pity. If he kill me for that, I can't help it."

"You're as brave as an eagle. That's right," said Vidda, nodding her head wisely. "He ought to pity them, and reward you for your generosity ; and if he don't, I say he's an old blood-thirsty tyrant." Here the valiant Vidda glanced uneasily over her shoulder, and almost fell in a fit, when Hilda, full of mischief, jumped at her and said, "Boo !" "Come on and let us have a play," cried Hilda, beginning to frisk around. "Let us be merry, at any rate, until he comes." Then they played "Catchee" up and down, round and round that immense hall, which was at least a quarter of a league long, until the child's cheeks glowed like roses, and the two fawns were panting with fatigue. Then they all stretched themselves down on the eider-down carpet, laughing and out of breath, to rest a little.

CHAPTER XII.

HILDA AND VIDDA.—THE SNOW-KING, AND ALL
THAT HE DID.

“WHEN you are quite rested,” said the brown-eyed fawn, Hilda, “let us go to the room of the white eagles. Should you not like to see them?”

“Yes, indeed,” replied the child; “that is, if they are not fierce and ill-natured.”

“Well, the fact is, one has to be uncommonly polite to them. They are very proud, and if one makes them mad they pounce down and fasten their sharp claws about one, and fly off with one to the peaks of Labra Arc before one knows where one is.”

“That’s nothing. To be polite to every one is what I have always been accustomed to,” replied the child, with a brave, calm smile.

"There's another place, Hilda—but, oh, it is so dreadful, those still, white, frozen faces! It might frighten her," said Vidda, with a shudder.

"What place is that?" asked the child. "I should like to see every thing that is worth seeing while I am here."

"I cannot take you there," replied Hilda. "The Snow-King would put my father to death if we even ventured near it. But I will tell you what it is," she added in a whisper.

"What?"

"It is a temple beautiful to behold, and its walls and pillars are made of ivory and pearl. But it is filled with dead maidens—maidens who, from time to time, were brought hither to become the brides of the Snow-King, but, somehow, by the time they reached here, they all became pale, and still, and cold. My father says they are dead, whatever that is. So the Snow-King had that splendid temple built for his frozen brides, and there they are all reposing on couches of ivory—some with long golden curls, some with dark curling tresses, others

with long glossy locks as black as the night itself. And sometimes the Snow-King goes there, and, if we are out on the mountain, we plainly hear the voice of his weeping."

"Did you and Vidda ever see the dead brides?" asked the child.

"Yes. We stole up there once when we were very young, and seeing so beautiful a place, we marched in, thinking no harm. But the Snow-King came while we were running from room to room, and if Flakana had not been with him, he would have put us to death on the spot. So you see we cannot go," replied Hilda.

"I should not like to go if it is forbidden, although I should be pleased to see the dead brides in the beautiful temple, if we could get leave."

"Come, then, let us go to the room of the white eagles," said Hilda, gayly.

They entered a lofty chamber, whose white walls sparkled with crystals. So lofty was it, that pines and hemlocks were growing under its roof, among the branches of which were

perched about twenty white eagles, who, having just devoured three or four fat seals for their supper, were about going to sleep. But the stir made by the giggling, romping fawns, caused them all to start fiercely up and open their bright red eyes, while they ruffled their plumage furiously.

"What have we here? What have we here? Oh, ye jades, but ye shall take a swift journey to Labra Arc in the morning!" screamed one of the eagles.

"We beg pardon," cried Hilda, frightened almost to death; "but we meant no harm. We only brought a stranger, who came with the king's daughter, to look at your highnesses."

Then all the eagles stretched out their necks, and bent their sharp red eyes on the child, who stood with a sweet, brave smile on her countenance, gazing up at the splendid creatures, when, with a sudden motion, they swooped down from the pines and hemlocks, and surrounded her. But there was no ire in their looks. Their plumage was smooth and their



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movements gentle—so gentle, that she smoothed the crest of the largest, who stood close beside her, and caressed the snowy pinions of another.

“Beautiful birds,” exclaimed the child, “I meant no harm in coming to see you, and I am very sorry that we awoke you.”

“We are happy to see thee, little maid. It is true we are very tired, having come from the four quarters of the world to-day : nevertheless, thou art very welcome. Where art thou from ?”

“I came from America with the Snow-Angel!” replied the child.

“From America !” they all cried with a flutter of joy. “Dost thou know our cousin there, the great AMERICAN EAGLE ?”

“I don’t know him, but we all love him, and are so proud of him over there that his likeness is on our great seals, on our gold and silver coin, and on our battle-flags,” replied the child quietly.

“We have been in great concern about him. We heard that he had been stung by a ven-

omous rattlesnake, and was sick almost unto death," said the old eagle.

"Yes," replied the child gravely; "it is all true. There's great trouble everywhere in my country. We have the pestilence, the rattlesnake, which is stinging every one to death; and we have a dreadful war; and, as if all that were not enough, *we have no snow*. That's what I am here for, to beg the Snow-King to send us snow."

"The Snow-King has his own troubles. His two sons, the North-Wind and the East-Wind, are breaking his heart; but he'll conquer, he'll conquer," said the old eagle, putting his foot down upon it.

"Every one seems to be in tribulation, and I think the end of the world must be near at hand," said the child. "Dear me! but do you not think, sir, that when I tell the Snow-King what trouble there is among the ground-squirrels, the wheat nation, and other helpless and suffering creatures, he'll send the snow-spirits with cordial and blankets to their relief?"

"Perhaps! perhaps! I really think he may.

He is a great friend and ally of our cousin, the American Eagle. But good-night, brave little maid. By day-dawn we have to go to Smyrna for figs and to Chios for sweet wines."

"Good-night, eagles!" responded the child, waving her hands and curtsying politely. The two fawns, Hilda and Vidda, had skipped out into the broad hall when the eagles swooped down, to be ready for a run if danger threatened, and there the child found them engaged in tickling each other in the ribs near the entrance; but no sooner did they see the eagles spreading their snowy wings, to fly up to their perches on the pines and hemlocks, than, making sure that they were to be seized forthwith, they made a flying leap, and were off like rockets, never stopping until they were under the shelter of Flakana's robes. The child clapped her hands and laughed. The white eagles laughed shrilly as they settled themselves to rest, and when the child got back to the banqueting hall, the two little cowards, standing close together near Flakana, looked ashamed and scared, and kept hiding their heads behind each

other to giggle. Their father, the respectable brown stag, came in just then and took them off, laughing and skipping, to bed.

“Come, little earth-sister!” said Flakana, holding out her beautiful hands, with a smile on her lovely countenance. “We must now go to rest; I have learned something which gives me great comfort. My father is a strong ally of the great King Eagle of your country. He is so much engaged at this time with my brothers North-Wind and East-Wind, who have taken sides with the rattlesnake, that I fear we shall not see him for some days, unless he can bring them into subjection.”

“But do you think, Flakana, that he will care for such poor little starving creatures as the ground-squirrels and the wheatonians?” she inquired anxiously. “You know that an eagle is strong enough to fight his own battles, but the other poor little things must perish if no one helps them.”

“My father has always been kind to them, but he has had such an endless struggle to keep my turbulent brothers in their places, that he

has not had time to give attention to the affairs of the distant portions of his kingdom. But let us go to sleep now, for we may possibly be summoned early." The child knelt down, and folding her hands, said her simple prayers, and nestling close under the Snow-Angel's wings, soon fell asleep.

From this sleep she was awakened by a tramping that shook the earth—a tramping heavy, even, and measured; and loud trumpet tones in shrill contention—which, however, gradually died away, when nothing was heard except the loud measured tramping, and soon all was silent as before.

"My father has come," said Flakana.

In a few minutes the brown stag, Cedric, entered the banqueting hall and summoned the Snow-Angel and the child to his majesty's presence. She said her prayers, smoothed back her long dusky curls from her round fair forehead, and silently placed her hand in Flakana's, ready to accompany her to the dreaded presence. She was almost as white as the Snow-Angel, and her knees trembled as she

walked, but for all that, she was firmly brave in her good purpose. She had come to plead for the helpless and oppressed, and, like the good maiden she was, she was determined not to flinch at the last moment. But she did not look up, no, not even when she stood at the foot of the Snow-King's throne, where every thing was as silent as death.

“What wouldst thou, little earth-maiden?” The voice was so solemn and sweet, that the child raised her eyes and saw that she was in the very presence she had so much dreaded, and that it was the Snow-King who had spoken. But the dazzling splendors which confronted her almost struck her blind. It was not the great throne, crusted with pink, white, and yellow diamonds, upon which he sat; or the canopy of golden feathers, fringed with pear-pearls, over his head; or his white velvet robes, covered with thousands of turquoise, emeralds, rubies, and diamonds, representing the heavenly constellations; nor yet the crown of stars upon his white head, that so dazzled her sight—it was none of these; it was the Snow-King's EYES,

which were brighter ten times over than all these splendors put together—his eyes, which were very large and of a light ultramarine blue; and in the centre of each, instead of there being a black pupil as we see in all eyes, there gleamed a STAR which shot forth rays like the sun at noonday. Three rays from each of those wonderful eyes streamed out, and lit up the magnificence of his throne and vestments with such splendor that the child could scarcely endure its intensity. But gradually her eyes grew strong, and she saw, crouched on each side of the throne, two young giants, who looked so fierce, and sullen, and wild, that she would have been terribly afraid had she not observed that the Snow-King held them chained to his girdle. Four immense white eagles, adorned with jewelled necklaces and orders of rank and merit, kept guard at the four corners of the throne. Another stood at the king's right hand, guarding the standards and banners of his empire. Overhead the arched ceiling was studded with gems; in fact, no fairy tale that the child had ever read could *begin* to equal all

that she saw, and she stood in speechless surprise at the ineffable splendors of the place, and filled with awe by the majestic presence of the Snow-King.

“What brings thee hither, earth-maiden?” he again asked.

“I have come,” said the child in trembling tones, but with a clear brave look into his eyes, “to beg that you will be so merciful as to send your snow-spirits to Winona, and the region round about. The governor of the ground-squirrels, and the governor of the wheat nation told me that their people were being devoured by their enemies, and were perishing with hunger and cold, all for the want of the snow-spirits, the blankets, and the cordials, you know.”

“True,” replied the Snow-King. “But in what corner of the earth is Winona?”

“It is a beautiful valley in Maryland?” answered the child.

“Maryland! Maryland! Where is Maryland?” inquired the Snow-King, musingly.

“Maryland is one of the United States of

America," said the child. "Don't you know our eagle, king?"

"Truly do I. Thou art welcome to my court, lovely maiden. I will instantly send to my chief captain to order off to Winona ten thousand million battalions of snow-spirits," exclaimed the king, while his wonderful eyes flamed brightly. "Thou art a brave-hearted maiden, to have come all this perilous way on such an errand. But tell me how my noble friend the eagle is."

"He will be able to fly soon," she replied, lifting her head proudly. "He would have died of the rattlesnake's sting but for a great young giant, who gave him the blood of his heart, from his own veins, to drink, and who fights and slays his enemies."

"Aha! I think I know that gallant young giant. His name is E Pluribus Unum! the greatest, best, and most powerful giant that ever lived." The child smiled brightly, and nodded her head.

"Dost thou see those two surly fellows chained to my girdle?"

"I see them," answered the child, shyly.

"Those are my two sons, North-Wind and East-Wind, who, the moment *E Pluribus Unum* sets his navies in motion to conquer the country of the eagle's great enemy, the rattlesnake, break away, and do their very best to sink ships, men, and treasures together. They deserve to be kept in chains until the end of time," said the Snow-King, wrathily.

"I am glad that you love my country, Snow-King. My mamma, and all of us at home, are true-blue. I have a brother, too—he is my sister Mary's husband—in the army of *E Pluribus Unum*—my brother Robert. And General Germaine is a great general, and he and his two sons have fought in ever so many battles; and if I was a man I'd fight too, for the honor of my flag. Did you ever see our beautiful flag, sir?" exclaimed the child, in a great glee. Oh, how I wish you could see it!"

"Did I ever see it!" cried the Snow-King, making a sign to his standard-bearer, who instantly unfurled the *STAR-SPANGLED BANNER*, which, in its magnificence, surpassed all the

banners the child had ever seen, for its thirty-three stars were real stars, and the blue field on which they shone was a scrap of the sky, and the red and white stripes were painted by the sunrise.

Oh, how it glittered, and how the old Snow-King's eyes shot flaming rays to the right and the left, when he lifted his crown from his head and stood up to "huzza," while the eagles flapped their strong wings and shrieked with delight! Flakana and the child danced round and round wildly, whilst the splendid banner kept waving from the dome over their heads. All paid it homage except the two surly giants, North-Wind and East-Wind, who stuck out their tongues, and putting their thumbs to their nose, twirled their fingers, in utter contempt of the patriot scene.

"Give her jewels! give her treasure, this brave little earth-maiden, who is so true to her country, and who loves her flag, not because it is a gay bunting, but because it is a sign of freedom to all the earth! Tell the snow-spirits to fill their canteens, to bundle up their blank-

ets and march in double-quick to Winona. But, brave, dark-eyed maiden, wilt thou not stay and be my wife?"

"Oh, no! oh, no!" cried the child, clinging affrightedly to Flakana. "Do not be angry, but, indeed, I should die if I were to stay away from my dear mamma; and then," she added, piteously, while tears streamed over her cheeks, "I am such a poor little child."

"All the beautiful young maidens that come to me," said the Snow-King, sadly, "are still, and white, and cold. They never speak or lift their eyes. A tall, dusky spirit, with a fair, solemn face, who brings them hither from time to time, says they turn to marble on the way. Thou art the first living maiden that has ever entered my dominions. Canst thou not stay?"

"I cannot stay. I must be gone directly," said the child, faintly but firmly.

"Give her treasures! Load her with precious jewels!" cried the Snow-King, rising up from his throne and shaking out his glittering robes. "Order my fleetest eagles to convey her safely

to Winona; and do thou, Flakana, attend the earth-maiden home.”

North-Wind and East-Wind suddenly sprang up and blew a shrill charge on the clarions that hung at their girdles, with such fury in their eyes that Flakana folded her large snowy wings about the child and swiftly fled from their presence. * * * *



CONCLUSION.

HOW IT WAS.

WE find ourselves once more in Mrs. Varney's room at Glen-Holme. It is midnight. The fire glows brightly in the grate. A shaded taper throws out a faint light. The tent-like draperies are drawn back from the low French bedstead. On a snowy pillow lies a pale little face, around which masses of dark hair cluster. Every thing is as silent as the grave. One might think the child dead, but for the faint breath which scarcely stirs the white night-robe over her bosom. She moves, and opens her eyes languidly, and looks around her. She finds, with surprise, that she is in her own mamma's room at Mrs. Vane's. There were the hyacinths and crocuses, the violets and roses in the window ; there the glowing grate ; there her angel-sister's portrait on the wall ;

and there, with her wan face leaning against the dark velvet of the chair in which she reclined, was her mamma asleep. On the centre-table, where the lamp and books were, a watch was ticking; a vial of medicine and a table-spoon were beside it.

“I wonder,” thought Effie, “what makes mamma’s face so very pale. I must have been sound asleep when Flakana brought me home. Oh, dear me! I never felt any thing fly like those eagles. It took my breath away! The Snow-King is a real jolly old fellow, but he gave me a small scare. *Where* can Flakana be?”

Effie attempted to lift up her head to look about her, but she was so feeble that she could not even move her hands. Mrs. Varney awoke with a start, looked at the watch, and dropping something into the spoon from the medicine vial, came to the bedside.

“Mamma,” whispered Effie, “give me some water.”

“Oh, my precious little daughter, do you know me?” cried Mrs. Varney, falling on her knees by the bedside and kissing her fondly.

“To be sure I do, mamma! That’s jolly, to ask me if I know *you*!” said Effie, looking fondly in the dear face. “The Snow-King wanted me to stay, but I wouldn’t—I am very thirsty.”

“Do not talk, darling—do not utter another word. I’ll give you the water, but you must not speak,” cried Mrs. Varney.

“Just once more, mamma! Where is Flakana?”

“Gone home,” replied Mrs. Varney soothingly. “Now go to sleep—do try, darling—there—close your dear, dear eyes.”

Effie did close her eyes, but she couldn’t sleep for a long time, for wondering where the “Governor” was, and if the snow-spirits had come, and how she got home so quietly, and what made her so very tired, but at last she did fall asleep, and did not awake until late the next morning. The bed-curtain was drawn between her and the light, to shade her eyes, and those who were in her mamma’s room thought she still slumbered. She knew that Dr. Denis was there, and heard Mrs. Vane and

Mrs. Germaine engaged in a low-toned conversation. Dr. Denis was speaking to her mamma, and he said: "The worst is over now. She has no fever to-day—not a particle. But she must be kept quiet, and don't let her read so many works of imagination when she gets well." Then Effie heard a low murmuring of thankfulness arise around her as the old doctor delivered his opinion, and Mrs. Varney sat down on the bedside, and leaning her face down on the pillow, wept tears of gratitude that the bitter trial had passed from her. Doctor Denis was touched deeply by Mrs. Varney's silent emotion, and, being a tender-hearted man, he walked over to the window, where he pretended to blow his nose. Then Effie heard him say: "I do not remember such a heavy fall of snow in fifty years;" after which he came to the bedside and drew back the curtain. Effie looked up in his face smiling.

"God bless my soul! she's all right!" he said cheerfully, while he lifted his hands—his gold-headed cane, which he always carried, being in

his right hand—and opened his eyes wide at her with such a comical look, that she gave a little, feeble, but merry laugh.

“Let me feel your pulse again—there—put out your tongue, if you’ve got any left,” said the doctor. “All right. But don’t you talk. You’ve talked enough these two weeks to last you two years.”

“Is it snowing, doctor?” she whispered.

“Snowing like the devil,” he answered, pleasantly.

“Is it in time for the wheat, doctor?” inquired Mrs. Germaine.

“I think so, madam. I think the wheat will be saved.”

“What nourishment shall Effie take, doctor?” inquired Mrs. Varney.

“Something light, madam. Tapioca, wine-jelly, a few spoonfuls of cream, and the like, but in small quantities. She has been dangerously ill, poor little woman, and we can’t be too careful.”

Mrs. Varney leaned over Effie, and, to her

great joy, the child, with a feeble effort, laid her arms about her neck and whispered:

“Have I, indeed, been very ill, darling?”

“Very, very ill, my precious,” replied her mamma, kissing her fondly.

“What has been the matter, Doctor Denis, with our little girl?” inquired Mrs. Germaine, as she stood outside the door talking with the excellent old physician.

“Typhoid, madam. It has been coming on for weeks, from all that I can learn. She’s perfectly conscious now, and must be kept quiet. She’ll soon be up again.” * * *

As Effie grew stronger, the VISION of the Snow-Angel faded away from her mind, like a gold-tinted mist from the morning sky.

THE END.

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